10.

Liber Roberti Lyell.

The wozkes of Geffray Chaucer newly prynted, with dyuers wozkes whiche were neuer in prynt before: As in the table moze playnly dothe appere.

Cum prꝛuilegio.

wdr fol. 291

Transmitted by Mr. Thorpe about 1802 vide p. 347.

Anno Dom. 1540.

British Museum

¶ To the kynges hyghnesse, my moste gratious souerayne lorde Henry the eight, by the grace of god kynge of Englande and of Fraunce, defensor of the faythe, and lorde of Irlande &c.

Amonges all other excellencyes, most gratious souerayn lorde, wherwith almighty god hath endowed mankynde, a-boue the residue of erthlye creatures, as an outwarde declaracio of reason or reasonablenesse, wherin consysteth the symylitude of man vnto aungels, and the difference betwene the same and brute beestes, I verayly suppose, that speche or langage is not to be reputed amonges the smallest or inferiours. For therby is expressed the conceyte of one to another in open and playne sentence, whiche in the residue of lyuelye creatures, lacketh and is not shewed amonges them, but by certayne couert and derke signes, and that in fewe thynges hauynge course and operation onely of nature. This speche or langage, after the confusyon of tonges, sente by goddes punyshmente for pryde and arrogance of people, hath ben by a certayne instyncte and dyspolycion naturall diuysed and inuented in sundrye partes of the worlde, as felowshypes or companyenges of folkes one with a nother chaunced, moche to the outwarde expressynge of the thyng in worde or sounde, accordynge to that wherof it had meanynge or sygnification. But in processe of tyme, by dylygence or polycye of people, after dyuers fourmes, figures, and impressyons in metall, barkes of trees, and other matter vsed for memorye and knowlege of thynges than present or passed, sondry letters or caracters were first amonges the phenicies deuysed and founde, with suche knyttynges and ioynynges of one to another by a marueylous subtylyte and crafte, as counterueyled was and is equiualent to the same langages. So as the conceyte of mannes mynde, whiche at the begynnynge was vsed to be declared by mouthe onely, came to suche poynte, that it was as sensybly and playnly expressed in wrytynge. Herupon ensewed a great occasion and corage vnto them that shulde wryte, to compone and adorne the rudenesse and barbaryte of speche, and to forme it to an eloquent and ordynate perfectyon, wherunto many and many great poetes and oratours haue hyghly employed theyr studyes and corages, leauynge therby notable renoume of them selues, and example perpetuell to their posterite. Amonges other, the Grekes in all kyndes of sciences, semed so to prenayle and soo ornate theyr tonge, as yet by other of right noble langages can nat be perfytely imitated or followed. The Latyns by example of the grekes, haue gotten or wonne to them no small glorye, in the fourmynge, order, and dyetynge of that tonge. Out of the whiche two, yf it be well searched, that is to saye, Greke and Latyn (thoughe by corruppcyon of speche it shulde seme moche otherwyse) haue ben deryued the residue of the langages that be wryten with the letters or caracters of eyther of them bothe: But of all speches, those whiche moste approche to the latynite, be the Italyan and Spaynysshe tonges, of whome the one by corrupcion of the Gothes and Longobardes had her begynnynge, as latyn spoken by straungers of a barbare vnderstandynge. The other beyng also latyn was by Vandales, Gothes, Moores, Sarracenes, and other so many tymes blemysshed, as marueyle it is to se now vnto what perfection these two formed out of the latyn and barbare speches be reduced. Nexte vnto them, in symylytude to the latyn is the Frenche tonge, whyche by dylygence of people of the same, is in fewe yeres passed so amended, as well in pronunciacion as in wrytynge, that an Englysshman by a small tyme exercysed in that tonge hath nat lacked grounde to make a grammer or rule ordinary therof. Though of trouth (whiche some shall scarcelye beleue) the Germayns haue so fourmed the order of their langage, that in the same, is bothe as moche plentie and as nere concordaunce to the phrase of the latyn, as the Frenche tonge hathe. And verayly, lyke as all these and the rest haue ben thus vigilant and studyous to meliorate or amende theyr langages: so hath there nat lacked amonges vs Englysshemen, whiche haue ryght well and notablye endeuoyred

endeuoyred and employed them selues, to the beautifyeng and bettryng of thenglyshe tonge. ¶ Amonges whome moost excellent prynce, my moost redoubted and gracious soueraygne lorde, I your most humble bedall, subiecte and seruaunte Wyllyam Thynne, chefe clerke of your kechyn, moued by a certayne inclynacion and zele, whyche I bere to here of any thynge soundynge to the laude and honour of thys youre noble realme, haue taken great delectacyon, as the tymes and layseres myght suffre, to rede and here the bokes of that noble and famous clerke Geffray Chaucer, in whose workes is so manyfest comprobacyon of hys excellent lernynge in all kyndes of doctrynes and sciences, suche fruitefulneste in wordes, wel accordynge to the matter and purpose, so sweete and pleasaunte sentences, suche perfectyon in metre, the compoſycion so adapted, suche freshneste of inuencyon, compendyousneste in narration, suche sensyble and open style, lackynge neyther maieste ne mediocrite conuenable in disposycion, and suche sharpeneste or quyckneste in conclusyon, that it is moche to be marueyled, howe in hys tyme, whan doutleste all good letters were layde a slepe throughout the worlde, as the thynge whiche eyther by the disposycion and influence of the bodyes above, or by other or dynaunce of god, seemed lyke and was in daunger to haue vtterlye perysshed, suche an excellente poete in our tonge, shulde as it were (nature repugnynge) sprynge and ryse. For thoughe it had ben in Demosthenes or Homerus tymes, whan all lernynge and excellencye of sciences floryshed amonges the Grekes, or in the season that Cicero prince of eloquence amonges latyns lyued, yet had it ben a thyng right rare and straūge and worthy perpetuall laude, that any clerke by lernynge or wytte coulde than haue framed a tonge before so rude and imperfyte, to suche a sweete ornature and compoſycion, lykely if he had lyued in these dayes, beynge good letters so restored and reuyued as they be, if he were nat empeched by the enuye of suche as may tollerate nothynge, whyche to vnderstonde their capacite doth nat extende, to haue broughte it vnto a full and fynall perfection. Wherefore gracious soueraygne lorde, takynge suche delyte and pleasure in the workes of thys noble clerke (as is afore mencioned) I haue of a longe season moche desyred to rede and here the same: and as bokes of dyuers impryntes came vnto my handes, I rasely and without grete study, myght and haue beperchended in them many errours, falsyties, and deprauacions, whiche euydently appered by the contrarietees and alteracions founde by collacyon of the one with the other, whereby I was moued and stryred to make dylygent serche, where I might fynde or recouer anye trewe copies or exemplaries of the sayde bookes, whereunto in processe of tyme, nat without coste and payne I attayned, and nat onely vnto suche as seme to be very trewe copies of those workes of Geffray Chaucer, whiche before had ben put in prynte, but also to dyuers other neuer tyll nowe imprinted, but remaynynge almoste vnknowen and in oblyuion, wherupon lamentynge with my selfe, the negligence of the people, that haue ben in this realme, who doutleste were very remysse in the settynge forthe or auaūcemente eyther of the hystories therof, to the great hynderaunce of the renoume of suche noble princes and valyant conquerours and capitayns as haue ben in the same, or also of the workes of memory of the famous and excellente clerkes in all kyndes of scyences that haue florysshed therin, Of whyche bothe sortes it hathe pleased god as hyghly to nobilytate this yle as any other regyon of christendome: I thought it in maner appertenant vnto my dewtye, and that of very honesty and loue to my countrey I ought no lesse to do, than to put my helpynge hande to the restauracyon and bryngynge agayne to lyghte of the sayd workes, after the trewe copies and exemplaries aforesayd. And desyrynge with my selfe, who of all other were moost worthy, to whom a thynge so excellent and notable shulde be dedycate, whiche to my concrite semeth for the admiracyon, noueltie, and straūgeneste that it myght be reputed to be of in the tyme of the authoure, in comparison, as a pure and fyne tryed precious or polyced iewell oute of a rude or indigest masse or matter, none coulde to my thynkynge occurre, that lyng, or in the tyme of Chaucer, was or is sufficiente, but onely youre maieste royall, whiche by dyrectyon and iudgement, as moost absolute in boyse dome and all kyndes of doctryne, coulde and

of his inmate clemency and goodnesse, wolde adde or gyue any authorite hereunto.
For this cause most excellente and in all hertues most pfitant prince, I as humbly prostrate before youre kyngly estate, lowlye supply and beseche the same, that it wol vouche safe to take in good parte my poore studye and desyrous mynde, in reducynge vnto lyght this so precious and necessarye an ornament of the tonge of thys youre realme, ouer prious to haue ben in any poynte lost, falsefyed, or neglected: So that vnder the shylde of youre moste royall protectyon and defence it may go forthe in publyke, and preuayle ouer those that wolde blemysshe, deface, and in many thynges clerely abolysshe the laude, renoume, and glorye heretofore compared, and meritoriously adquired by dyuers princes, and other of this sayd moste noble ile, whereunto nat onely straungers vnder pretexte of hyghe lernynge and knowledge of theyr malycious and peruers myndes, but also some of your owne subiectes, blynded in foly and ignorance, do with great studye contende. Most gracious, victorious, and of god moste electe and worthye prince, my moste dradde soueraygne lorde, in whome of very meryte, dewtie, and successyon, is renewed the glorious eyrell of Defensor of the christen faythe, whiche by your noble progenytour, the greate Constantyne, some tyme kynge of this realme, and emperour of Rome was next God and his apostels, chefelye maynteyned, corroborate, and defended, almyghtye Jesu sende to your highnesse the contynuall and euerlastynge habundaunce of hys infynite grace. Amen.

¶ Thus endeth the preface.

¶ A table of all the names of the workes contayned in this volume.

¶ The preface.
The Canterbury tales. i.
The Romant of the Rose ii.
Troylus and Cresseyde iii.
The testament of Cresseyde iiii.
The legende of good women, wh a balade v.
Boecius de Consolatione philosophie vi.
The bireame of Chaucer, with a balade vii.
The assemble of Foules viii.
The floure of Curtesy, with a balade ix.
Origene prue is dede & beryed in a gerydyrt x.
La bele dame sans mercy xi.
Anelyda and false Arcyte xii.
The assemble of Ladyes xiii.
The conclusyon of the Astrolobye xiiii.
The complaynt of the blacke knyght xv.
A praysle of women xvi
The house of Fame xvii.
The testament of Loue xviii.
The lamentacio of Mary Magdaleyn xix.
The Remedy of loue xx.
The complaynt of Mars and Venus xxi.
The complaynt of Mars alone xxii.
The complaynt of Venus alone xxiii.
The letter of Cupyde xxiiii.
A balade of our Lady xxv.
A balade to kyng Henry the fourthe xxvi.
Of the Cuckowe & the Nightyngale xxvii.
Scogan vnto the yonge lordes and gentylmen of the kynges house xxviii.
A balade of good counsaile by Chaucer. xxix.
Dyuers other goodly balades &c. xxx.

¶ Thus endeth the first table and here followeth the seconde.

¶ In this table ye maye fynde any thynge that ye woll haue in this volume by the Folio, as followeth.

The prologes of the Caunterbury tales.
The knyghtes tale fo. primo.
The Millers tale fo. xii.
The Reues tale fo. xv.
The Cokes tale fo. xviii.
The Man of lawes tale fo. xix.
The Squiers tale fo. xxv.
The Marchaundes tale fo. xxix.
The wyfe of Bathes prologue fo. xxxiiii.
The wyfe of Bathes tale fo. xxxvii.
The Freres tale fo. xl.
The Sompners tale fo. xlii.
The clerke of Oxenfordes tale fo. xlv.
The Frankeleyns tale fo. li.
The seconde Nunes tale fo. lvii.
The prologue of ỳ Chanõs yoman fo. lx.
The doctor of Phisykes tale fo. lxiiii.
The Pardoners prologue fo. lxv.
The Pardoners tale fo. lxvi.
The Shypmans tale fo. lxix.
The Priores prologue fo. lxxi.
The Priores tale fo. xxdem.
The ryme of sir Topas fo. lxxii.
The tale of Chaucer fol. lxxiii.

The

The prologues.

The Monkes prologue fo.lxxxiii.
The Monkes tale fo.eodem.
The tale of the Nunnes preest fo.lxxxviii.
The Manciples tale fo.xci.
The Plowmans tale fo. xciii.
The persons prologue fo. C.
The persons tale fo.eodem.

¶ Explicit Cauntirbury tales.

The Romaunt of the Rose fo. C.xx.

¶ Troylus and Creseyde is deuyded in to fyue bookes.

¶ The fyrst boke begynneth fo. C.lvii.
The seconde boke begynneth fo. C.lxiii.
The thirde boke begynneth fo. C.lxxii.
The fourth boke begynneth fo. C.lxxxii.
The fyfthe boke begynneth fo. C.xci.

¶ Explicit Troylus and Creseyde.

The testament of Creseyde fo. CC. ii.

¶ The legende of Good women hath all these folowyng. First.

¶ The prologue. fo. CC.b.
The legende of Cleopatras fo. cc.ix.
The leg. of Thysbe of Babylone fo.eodem
The legende of quene Dydo fo. cc. xi.
The leg. of Hipsiphile & Medea fo.cc.xiii.
The leg of Lucrece of Rome fo.cc. xv.
The legende of Ariadne fo.cc.xvi.
The legende of Philomene fo.cc.xvii.
The legende of Phillys fo.cc.xviii.
The legende of Hypermestra fo. cc.xix.

¶ Explicit the legende of Good women.

¶ Boetius de Consolatione is deuyded in to fyue bokes.

The first boke beginneth fo. cc.xxi.
The seconde boke beginneth fo.cc.xxv.
The thirde boke begynneth fo.cc.xxxi.
The fourth boke begynneth fo.cc.xl.
The fyfth boke begynneth fo.cc.xlvii.

¶ Explicit Boetius de consolatione.

¶ All these workes folowyng be workes by them selfe.

The dreame of Chaucer fo.cc.liii.
The assemble of Foules fo.cc.lix.
The Flour of Curtesy fo. cc.lxiii.
Howe Pyte is deed &c. fo. cc.lxv.
Labele dame fauns mercy fo. cc.lxvi.
Innelyda and false Arcyte fol.cc.lxx.
The assemble of Ladyes fo cc.lxxiii.
The conclus.of thastrolaby fo.cc.lxxix.
The cõplaynt of ỹ blacke knyȝt fo.cc.lxxxvii.
A prayse of women fo.cc.xci.

¶ The house of Fame is deuyded in to thre bookes.

The first boke begynneth fo.cc.xcii.
The seconde boke begynneth fo.cc.xcv.
The thirde boke begynneth fo. cc.xcviii.

¶ Explicit the house of Fame.

¶ The testament of Loue is deuyded in to thre bokes.

The fyrst boke begynneth fo. ccc ii.
The seconde boke begynneth fo.ccc.vii.
The thirde boke begynneth fo.ccc.xxu

¶ All these workes folowyng de workes by them selfe.

The lamentacion of Mary Magdalayne fo.ccc.xxvb.
The remedy of Loue fo.ccc.xxxix
The cõplaynt of Mars & Venus fo.ccc.xlii.
The complaynt of Mars alone fo. xliii.
The cõplaynt of Venus alone fo.xliiii.
The letter of Cupyde fo.eodem.
A balade of our lady fo. ccc.xlvii.
A balade to kyng Hẽry the.iiii.fo.ccc. xlviii.
Of the cuckowe & the nightingale fo.ccc.l.
Scogan vnto the yonge lordes and gentylmen of the kynges house fo.ccc.lii.
Dyuers other balades of Chaucer.&c.

Thus endeth the table of al the workes.

¶ Eight goodly questyons, with their aunswers.

SOmtyme in Greece that noble region
There were eight clerkes of great sciẽce
Philosophers of notable discretion
Of whom was asked, to proue their prudẽce
Eight questions, of derke intelygence
To whiche they answered after their entent
As here dothe appere playne and euydent

¶ The fyrst question, what erthly thyng

Is best, and to god moost comendable
The first clerke answered without tarying
A mannes soule, euer ferme and stable
In right, from trouthe nat varyable
But nowe alas ful sore may we wepe
For couetyse hath brought trouthe a slepe

The seconde, what thyng is moost odious
A double man sayd the philosophre
With a virgyn face and a tayle venomous
With a fayre vieu, and a false profre
A corrupte caryen in a golden tree
It is a monster in natures lynage
One man to haue a double vysage

The thirde, what is the best dower
That maye be to a wyse appropriate
A clene lyfe, was the clerkes answer
Without lyme, chast, and inuyolate
From al disceytes, and speches inornate
Or countenaunce, whiche shal be to dispyse
No fyre make, and no smoke wol aryse

The fourth question, what mayden may
Be called clene in chastyte
The fourth clerke answered, which alway
Euery creature is ashamed on to lye
Of whō euery man reporteth great honeste
Good maydens kepe your chastyte forthe
And remēbre that good name is golde worth

Who is a poore man euer ful of wo
A couetous man, whiche is a nygon
He that in his herte can neuer saye ho
The more good, the lesse distributyon
The richer, the worse of condityon
Men in this cost, clepen him a nygarde
Sir Guy the bribour is his stewarde

Whiche is a riche man without fraude
He that can to his good suffyse
What soeuer he hath, he preseth god ꝑ laude
And kepeth him clene from al couetyse
He desyreth nothyng in vngoodly wyse
His body is here, his mynde is aboue
He is a riche man, for god dothe him loue

Who is a foole, is the seuenth demaunde
He that wolde hurte, and hath no powere
Thought he mykel, moche wolde he cōmaunde
His malyce great, his myght nought worre
He discreteth ful fayre, ful lytel may he dere
Remembreth nat howe men haue sayd before
God sendeth a shrewde sowe a shorte horne

Who is a wyse man, is the eight question
He that myght noye, and dothe no noyaunce
Myght punyshe, and leaueth punyssion
A man merciful without vengeaunce.
A wyse man putteth in remembraunce
Sayeng, had I venged al myne harme
My cloke had nat be furred halfe so warme.

Explicit.

To the kynges moost noble grace, and to the lordes and knyghtes of the garter.

TO you wele of honour & of worthinesse
Our christen king, the heire & successour
Unto Justinians deuout tenderneſſe
In faith of Jesu our redemptour
And to you lordes of the garter floure
Of cheualry, as men you clepe and cal
The lorde of vertue, and of grace authour
Graunt the frute of your fose neuer appal

O liege lorde that haue eke the lykeneſſe
Of Constantyne, thensample and myrrour
To princes al, in humble buxumneſſe
To holy churche o verray sustaynour
And pyller of our faith, and warryour
Agayne the heresyes bytter galle
Do forthe do forthe, contynue your socour
Holde vp Christes baner lette it nat falle

This yle or this had ben but herthesse
Had be of your faith the force and vigour
And yet this day the fendes crabbydneſſe
Wo eueth fully to cat the a tyme and houre
To haue an vs your lieges a sharpe shoure
And to his seruytude vs knytte and thralle
But aye we trust in you our protectour
On your constaunce we awayten alle

Cōmaundeth that no wight haue hardyneſſe
O worthy kyng, our christen emperour
Of the faith to dispute more or lesse
Openly amonge people: her errour
Springeth al day, and engendreth rumour
Maketh such lawe, and for ought may befal
Obserue it wele, there to be ye dettour
Dothe so, and god in glorie shal you dal

Ye lordes eke, shynyng in noble fame
To whiche appropred is the mayntenaunce

Of

Of Chrystes cause, in honour of his name
Shout on, and put his foes to vtraunce
God wolde so, so wolde eke your legiaunce
To the two pertayn you your duite
Who so nat keperh this double obseruaunce
Of meryte and honour pased is he

Your style sayth, ye be fors to shame
Nowe lyth of your fayth the perseueraunce
In whiche an heape of vs be halte and lame
Our christendyng of Englande & of Fraūce
And ye my lordes with your alyaunce
And other faithful people that there be
Trust I to god, shal quenche al this noisaūce
And this lande sette in highe prosperite

Conquest of highe prowesse is for to tame
The wylde woodnesse of these myscreaunce
Right to the rote repe ye that same
Slepe nat this, but for goddes plesaunce
And his mother, and in lygnifyaunce
That ye ben of saynt Georges lyuere
Do the him seruyce and knightly obeysaunce
For Chrystes cause is his, wel knowen ye

Stiffe stande in that, & ye shal greue & grame
The foe to peace, the norice of distaunce
That nowe is erneſt, tourne it into game
Nowe lythe of your beleue the constaunce
Lorde liege, & lordes haue in remembraunce
Lorde of al is the blyssful Trinyte
Of whose vertue the mighty habundaunce
You herte and strength in faithful vnyte.

¶ Explicit.

When faith fayleth in preestes sawes
And lordes hestes are holden for lawes
And robbery is holden purchase
And lechery is holden solace
Than shal the londe of Albion
Be brought to great confusyon

It falleth for euery gentylman
To say t he best that he can
In mannes absence
And the sothe in his presence
It cometh by kynde of gentyl blood
To caste away al heynesse
And gader togider wordes good
The werke of wysedome beareth wytnesse.

¶ Finis.

The Canterbury tales.

Whanne that Aprill with his shoures sote
The drought of Marche had pered the rote
And bathed euery vayne in suche lycoure
Of whiche vertue, engẽdred is the floure
Whan zephirus eke with his sote breth
Enspired hath euery holte and heth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram halfe his course ronne
And smale foules maken melodye
That slepen al nyght with open eye
So pryketh hem nature in her corage
Than longen folke to go on pylgrymage
And palmers to seken straunge strondes
To serue halowes couthe in sondry londes
And specyally fro euery shyres ende
Of Englonde to Caunterbury they wende
The holy blysful martyr for to seke
That hem hath holpen, whan they were seke.

Ytbefel that season on a day
In South warke at ꝑ taberde as I lay
Redy to go in my pylgrymage
To Caunterbury with deuoute corage
That nyght was come in to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye
Of sondry folke by auenture yfal
In felyshyp, and pylgrymes were they al
That toward Caunterbury wolde ryde
The chambres and stables weren wyde
And wel weren they eased at the best
And shortly whan the sonne was at rest
So had I spoken with hem euerychone
That I was of her felyshyp anone
And made forward erly for to ryse
To take our way there as I you deuyse
But nathelesse, whyle I haue tyme & spase
Or that I ferther in this tale pase
Me thynke it accordaunt to reason
To tel you al the condycion
Of eche of hem so as it semed me
And whiche they were, and of what degre,
And eke in what aray that they were in

And at a berystowe there wyth I fyrst begyn.

¶ The knyght. i.

A knyght there was, and ꝑ a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he fyrst began
To ryden out, he loued chyualrye
Trouthe, honour, fredom, and curtesye
Ful worthy was he in his lordes warre
And therto had he rydden no man so farre
As wel in cristendome as in hethenesse
And euer had honour for his worthynesse
At Alysaundre he was, whan it was won
Ful ofte tyme he had the boorde begon
Abouen all nacyons in Pruce
In Lettowe had he rydden and in Luce
No cristen man so ofte of his degre
In Gernade at the syege had he be
At Algezer, and rydden in Belmarye
At Lyeys was he, and also at Satalye
Whan they were wonne, and in the great see
At many a noble armye had he be
At mortal batayles had he ben fyftene
And foughten for our fayth at Tramyssene
In lystes thryes, and aye slayne his foo
This ilke worthy knyght had ben also
Sometyme with the lorde of Palathye
Ayenst another hethen in Turkye
And euermore he had a souerayne prys
And though he was worthy he was wyse
And of his porte as meke as is a mayde
He neuer yet no vilanye ne sayde
In al his lyfe, vnto no maner wyght
He was a verry perfyte gentyl knyght
For to tel you of his aray
His hors were good, but he was not hym gay
Of fustyan he wered a gypon
Al besmotred with his haubergeon
For he was late come fro his vyage
And wente for to don his pylgrymage.

¶ The Squyer. ii.

With hym there was his sonne a yong
Squyer a louer and a lusty bachelere
In his lockes crul as they were layde in
Of twēty yere of age he was I gesse
Of his stature he was of euen lengthe
And wonderly delyuer, and of great strengthe
And he had be somtyme in chyuachye
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and in Picardye
And borne hym wel, as of so lytel space
In hope to stande in his ladyes grace
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of freshe flowres, whyte and rede
Syngyng he was, or floytyng al the day
He was fresshe as is the moneth of May
Short was his gowne, with sleues long & wyde
Wel coude he sytte on an horse, and fayre ryde
He coude songes make, and wel endyte
Juste and eke daunce, portray and wel wryte
So hote he loued, that by nyghtertale
He slepte no more than doth the nightyngale
Curteys he was, lowly and seruysable
And carfe before his fader at the table.

¶ The Squyers yoman iii.

A yoman had he and seruauntes no mo
At that tyme, for hym lyst to ryde so
And he was clad in cote & hode of grene
A shefe of pecocke arowes bryght and kene
Under his belt he bare ful thryftely
Wel coude he dresse his tackle yomanly
His arowes drouped not with fethers lowe
And in his hande he bare a myghty bowe
A not heed had he, with a broune vysage
Of wodde craft wel couth he al the vsage
Upon his arme he bare a gay bracer
And by his syde a swerde and a bokeler
And on that other syde a gay daggere
Harneysed wel, and sharpe as poynte of spere
A christofer on his brest of syluer shene
An horne he bare, the baudryke was of grene
A forster was he soothly as I gesse

¶ The Prioresse. iiii.

There was also a Nonne a Prioresse
That of her smylyng was ful symple & coye
Her greteste othe was by sayntē Loye
And she was called dame Eglentyne
Ful wel she songe the seruyce dyuyne
Entewned in her nose ful semely
And Frenche she spake ful fetously
After the scholē of Stratforde atte bowe
For frenche of Parys was to her vnknowe
At mete was she wel ytaught withal
She let no morsel fro her lyppes fal
Ne wette her fyngers in her sauce depe
Wel couth she carye a morsel and wel kepe
That no drope ne fel vpon her brest
In curtesy was set ful moche her lest
Her ouerlyp wyped she so clene
That in her cup was no ferthynge sene
Of grece, whan she dronken had her draughte

Ful

Fulfremely after her meate she raught
And sykerly she was of great dispoze
And ful plesaunt, and amyable of poze
And payned her to countrefete chere
Of courte, and to be stately of manere
And to ben holden digne of reuerence
But for to speke of her conscience
She was so charytable and so pytous
She wolde wepe yf that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde
Of smale houndes had she that she fedde
With roste flesshe, mylke, or wastel breed
But sore wepte she yf any of hem were deed
Or yf men smote hem with a yarde smarte
And al was conscience and tender herte
Ful semely her wympple pynched was
Her nose tretes, her eyen gray as glas
Her mouth smale, and therto softe and reed
But sykerly she had a fayre forehed
It was almost a span brode I trowe
For hardely she was not vndergrowe
Ful fetys was her cloke as I was ware
Of smale coral about her arme she bare
A payre of bedes, gauded al with grene
And theron honge a broche of golde ful shene
On which ther was first wrytē a crowned.A
And after that (Amor vincit omnia)
Another Nonne with her had she
That was her chapeleyn, and preestes thre

The Monke. b.

A Monke there was, faire for the maystry
An out ryder, that loued venery
A manly man to ben an abbot able
Ful many a deynte horse had he in stable
And whan he rode men might his bridel here
Gyngelyng in a whistlyng wynde as clere
And eke as loude, as dothe the chapel bell
There as this lorde was keper of the cel
The rule of saint Maure and of sayne Benet
Bycause it was olde and somdele streyt
This ylke Monke let olde thynges pace
And held after the newe worlde the space
He yaue not of the texte a pulled hen
That sayth, that hunters be not holy men
Ne that a monke whan he is recheles
Is lykened to a fysshe that is waterles
This is to say, a Monke out of his cloystre
This ylke text held he not worthe an oystre
And I say his opinion was good (wood
What sholde he studye, and make him self
Upon a boke alway in cloyster to powre
Or swynke with his handes, and labowre
As Austyn byd, how shal the worlde be served
Let Austyn have his swinke to him reserued
Therfore he was a pryckasour a right
Greyhoundes he had as swift as foules of flight
Of prickynge and of huntynge for the hare
Was al his lust, for no coste wolde he spare
I sawe hys sleues purfled at the hande
With grise, and that the fynest in a lande
And for to fasten his hoode vnder the chynne
He had of golde wrought a curious pynne
A loue knot in the greater ende there was
His heed was balde, and shone as any glas
And eke his face, as he had ben anoynte
He was a lorde ful fat and in good poynte
His eyen stepe, and rolynge in his heed
That stemed as a furneys of a leed
His bootes soupple, his hors in great estate
Now certaynly he was a fayre prelate
He was not pale as a forpyned ghost
A fatte swan loued he best of any rost
His palfray was brown as is a bery

The Frere. bi.

A frere there was a wanton and a merry
A limytour, a ful solempne man
In al the ordres foure is none that can
So moche of dalyaunce and fayre langage
He had made ful many a mariage
Of ponge women at his owne cost
Vnto his order he was a noble post
Ful wel beloued, and familyer was he
With frankeleyns ouer al in his countre
And with worthy women of the toun
For he had power of confessyoun
As he sayd hym self, more than a curate
For of his order he was licenciate
Ful swetely herde he confessyon
And plesaunt was his absolucyon
He was an esy man to gyue penaunce
There as he wyst to haue a good pytaunce
For vnto a poore ordre for to gyue
Is sygne that a man is wel yshryue
For yf he gaue, he durst make auaunt
He wyst that a man was repentaunt
For many a man is so harde of herte
That he may not wepe though hym smerte
Therfore in stede of weppynge and prayres
Men mote gyue syluer to the poore freres
His typpet was ay fyled ful of knyues
And pynnes, for to gyue fayre wyues
And certaynly he had a merry note

Wel conde he synge and playen on a rote
Of yedding he bare betterly the pryce
His necke was whyte as the flowre delyce
Therto stronge he was as a champioun
And knewe wel the tauerns wel in euery toun
And euery hostelier and taplere
Bet than a lazer or a beggere
For vnto suche a worthy man as he
Accordeth naught, as by his faculte
To haue with lazers suche acquayntaunce
It is not honest, it may not auaunce
For to delen with suche poraye
But al with riche, and sellers of vitayle
And ouer al there as profyte shulde aryse
Curteys he was, and lowly of seruyce
There nas no man no where so vertuous
He was the best begger in his hous
And gaue a certayne ferme for the graunte
None of his brethren came in his haunte
For though a wydowe had but a shoo
(So pleasaunt was his In principio)
Yet wolde he haue a farthyng or he went
His purchase was better than his rent
And rage he couth as it were a whelpe
In louedayes there coude he mykel helpe
For there he was nat lyke a cloysterere
With a threde bare cope, as a poore frere
But he was lyke a maister or a pope
Of double worsted was his semy cope
So rounded was as a bel out of presse
Somwhat he lysped for his wantonnesse
To make his Englysshe swete vpon his tonge
And in his harpyng, whan he had songe
His eyen twinkeled in his heed aryght
As doone the sterres in a frosty nyght
This worthy frere was called Huberde.

¶ The Marchaunt. vii.

A Marchaūt was there with a longe berde
In motley, en high on his horse he sat
Upon his heed a Flaunders bever hat
His botes clasped fayre and fetously
His resons he spake ful solempnely
Sowenyng alway ꝑ encrease of his wynning
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Betwixe Middelburgh and Orewel
Wel coude he in eschaunge sel
This worthy man ful wel his wit bysette
There wiste no wight that he was in det
So stately was he of his gouernaunce
With his bargeyns, and with his chenisshaūce
For sothe he was a worthy man withal
But sothly to sayn, I not what men him cal.

¶ The clerke of Oxenforde viii.

A Clerke there was of Oxenforde also
That vnto logike had longe ygo
As leane was his hors as a rake
And he was nothing fat I vndertake
But lokede holowe, and therto soberly
Ful thredbare was his ouer courtpy
For he had yet getten him no benefice
Ne was nought worthy to haue none office
For him was leuer to haue at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes, clad in blacke or reed
Of Aristotle, and of his philosophye
Than robes ryche, or fydel, or gay sautrye
But al be that he was of a philosophye
Yet had he but lytel golde in cofre
But al that he might of his frendes hente
On bokes and on lernyng he it spente
And bysily gan for the soules pray
Of hem that helpen him to scholay
Of study toke he moste cure and hede
Not a worde spake he more than nede
And that was sayd in fourme and reuerence
And short and quicke, and of hye sentence
Sownyng in moral vertue was his speche
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

¶ The sergiant at lawe. ix.

A Sergiant of lawe, ware and wyse
That often had ben at the parvyse
That was also ful ryche of excellence
Discreet he was, and of great reuerence
He semed such, his wordes were so wyse
Justyce he was ful often in assyse
By patent, and by playne commyssioun
For his science, and his hye renoun
Of fees and robes had he many one
So great a purchasour was no where none
Al was fee symple to hym in effecte
His purchasing might not be to him suspecte
No where so bysy a man as he there nas
And yet he semed bysier than he was
In termes had he case and domes al
That fro the tyme of kyng Wyllyam was fal
Therto he coude endite, and make a thyng
There coude no wight pinche at his writyng
And euery statute coude he playne by rote
He rode but homely in a medley cote
Gyrt with a seynt of silke, with barres smale
Of his array, tel I no longer tale.

The

¶ The Frankeleyn. i.

A frankeleyn there was in his companye
Whyte was his berde, as is the deyſye
And of his complexion he was ſanguyne
Wel loued he by the morow a ſoppe in wyne
To lyuen in delyte was euer hys wonne
For he was Epycures owne ſonne
That held opinion, that playne delyte
Was very felycite perfyte
An houſholder, and that a great was he
Saynt Julyan he was in his countre
His breed, hys ale, was alway after one
A better vitailled man was no where none
Without bake meate was neuer hys houſe
Of fyſhe and fleſhe, and that ſo plenteouſe
It ſnewed in hys houſe of meate and drinke
Of al deyntes that men conde thynke
After the ſondze ſeaſons of the yere
So chaūged he his meate and his ſuppere
Ful many a fatte partrych had he in mewe
And many a breme, and many a luce in ſtewe
Wo was his cooke, but hys ſauce were
Poynaunt and ſharpe, and redy al hys gere
His table dormaunt in his hal alway
Stode redy couered al the longe day
At feſtyuns there was he lorde and ſyre
Ful often tyme he was knyght of the ſhyre
An anelace and gypſere al of ſylke
Hyng at his gyrdle, white as morowe milke
A ſheryfe had he ben, and a countour
Was nowhere ſuche a worthy vauaſour.

¶ The Haberdaſher. xi.

An Haberdaſher there was and a carpenter
A webbe, a dyer, and a tapyſer
Al they were yclothed in o lyuere
Of a ſolempne and a great fraternyte
Ful freſhe and newe her geare ypiked was
Her knyues ychaped were not with bras
But al with ſyluer wrought ful clene and wele
Her gyrdeles and her pouches euery dele
Wel ſemed euerych of hem a fayre burgeys
To ſytten at a yelde hal, on the hye deys
Euerych for the wyſdome that he can
Was ſhape lyche for to ben a alderman
For catayle had they right ynoughe and rent
And eke her wyues wolde it wel aſſent
And elſ certayne they were to blame
It is ful fayre to ben ycleped madame
And goo to vigyles al before
And haue a mantel royallyche yborne.

¶ The Cooke. xii.

A Cooke they had with hem for the nones
To boyle the chykens and the mary bones
And poudre merchaūt, tarte, and galingale
Wel conde he know a draughte of London ale
He couth roſte, ſethe, boyle, and frye
Make mortreys, and wel bake a pye
But great harme was it, as it thought me
That on hys ſhyne a mormal had he
And blanke manger made he with the beſt.

¶ The Shypman. xiii.

A Shipmā was ther, wōning fer by weſt
For aught I wot, he was of Dertemouth
He rode vpon a rouncy, as he couthe
In a gowne of faldyng to the knee
A dagger hangyng by a lace had he
Aboute his necke, vnder his arme downe
The hot ſōmer had made his hew al brownne
And certayne he was a good felawe
Ful many a draught of wine had he drawe
Fro Burdeux ward, while ỹ chapmen ſlepe
Of nyce conſcience took he no kepe
If that he faught, and had the hygher honde
By water he ſent hem home to euery londe
But of his craft, to reken wel his tydes
His ſtremes and hys daungers hym beſydes
His herbrough, his moone, and his lodemanage
Ther was none ſuche from Hul to Cartage
Hardy he was, and wyſe to vndertake
With many a tempeſt had his berde be ſhake
He knewe al the hauens as they were
Fro Scotlande to the Cape de feneſtere
And euery creke in Bzitayne and in Spayne
His barge was called the Maudelayne

¶ The doctour of phiſike. xiiii.

With vs there was a doctour of phiſyke
In al this worlde ne was ther non him
To ſpeke of phiſike and of ſurgerye (lyke
For he was grounded in aſtronomye
He kepte his pacient a ful great del
In houres, by hys magyke naturel
Wel couthe he fortune the aſſendent
Of his ymage for hys patient
He knewe the cauſe of euery maladye
Were it of colde, hete, moyſte, or drye
And where engendred and of what humour
He was a very parfyte practyſour
The cauſe yknowe, and of hys harme the rote
Anone he gaue to the ſyche man hys bote

Ful

Ful redy had he his apoticaries
To sende hym drogges and his letuaries
For eche of hem made other for to wynne
Her frendshyp nas not newe to begynne
Wel knewe he the olde Esculapius
And Dioscorides, and eke Rufus
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and eke Galien
Serapion, Razis, and also Auicen
Auerroys, Damascene, and Constantyn
Bernarde, Gatisden, and Gilbertyn
Of his dyete mesurable was he
For it was of no superfluite
But of grete nourishyng, and digestyble
His study was but lytel on the Byble
In sanguyne and in pers he clad was al
Lyned with Taffata, and with sendal
And yet he was but easy of dispence
He kept that he wan in tyme of pestilence
For golde in Phisike is a cordyal
Therfore he loued golde in special.

The wyfe of Bathe. xv.

A Good wyfe there was beside Bathe
But she was somdel defe, & pitie was scathe
Of clothe makyng she had such an haunt
She passed hem of Ipre, or of Gaunt
In al the parysshe wyfe ne was there none
That to the offryng before her shulde gone
And if there dyd, certayne ryght wroth was she
That she was al out of charyte
Her kerchers ful fyne were of grounde
I durst swere they wayden ten pounde
That on a Sonday were vpon her heed
Her hosen were of fyne scarlet reed
Ful streyte ystreyned, and shoes ful newe
Bolde was her face, and feed was her hewe
She was a worthy woman al her lyue
Husbandes at the chirche dore had she fyue
Withouten other company in youthe
But therof nedeth not to speke as nouthe
And thryse had she ben at Jerusalem
She had passed many a straunge streme
At Rome had she ben, and at Boloyne
In Galys at saynt James, and at Coloyne
She coude moche of wandryng by the way
Gat tothed was she sothly for to say
Vpon an ambler esely she sat
Ywympled wel, and on her heed an hat
As brode as is a bokeler or a targe
A foote mantel aboute her hyppes large
And on her fete a payre of spurres sharpe
In felyshyp wel coude she laughe and carpe
Of remedies of loue she conde perchaunce
For she coude of that arte the olde daunce

The Person. xvi.

A Good man there was of religioun
And was a poore person of a toun
But rich he was of holy thought & werke
He was also a lerned man, and a clerke
That Christes gospel truely wolde he preche
His parisshens deuoutly wolde he teche
Benygne he was and wonder diligent
And in aduersyte ful patyent
And such he was proued oft sythes
Ful lothe were hym to curse for his tythes
But rather wolde he yeuen out of doute
Vnto his poore parisshens aboute
Of his Offering and of his substaunce
He coude in lytel thing haue suffysaunce
Wide was his parisshe, & houses fer asondre
But he ne left neither for rayne ne thondre
In sickenesse ne in mischefe for to vysyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche & lyte
Vpon his fete, and in his hande a staffe
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaffe
That firste he wrought, & afterwarde taught
Out of the gospel he the wordes caught
And this fygure he added eke therto
That yf golde rust, what shulde yron do
For if a preest be foule, on whom we trust
No wonder is a lewde man to rust
And shame it is, if a prest take keep
To se a shytten shepherd, and a clene shepe
Wel ought a preest ensample for to yeue
By his clennesse, howe his sheep shulde lyue.
He sette not his benefice to hyre
And let his sheep accombre in the myre
And ronne to London to saynt Poules
To seken hym a chaunterye for soules
Or with a brotherhede to be withholde
But dwelt at home, and kepte wel his folde
So that the wolfe ne made hem not miscary
He was a shepherde, and not a mercenary
And though he holy were and vertuous
He was not to synful men dispytous
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne
But in his techyng discrete and benigne
To drawen folke to heuen with fayrenesse
By good ensample, this was his busynesse
But yf it were any person obstynate
What so he were of hye or lowe estate
Hym wold he snybbe sharply for the nonis
A better preest I trowe no where non is

He

He wayted after no pompe ne reuerence
He maked hym no spyced conscience
But Christes lore, and his apostels twelue
He taught, but first he folowed it hym selue.

The Plowman xvii.

WIth hym there was a Plowman
hys brother
That had ylad of dunge many a fother
A trewe swynker and a good was he
Lyuing in peace, and parfyte charyte
God loued he best with al his herte
At al tymes, thoughe hym gamed or smerte
And than his neighbours right as hym selfe
He wolde thresshe and therto dyke and delfe
For Christes sake, for euery poore wyght
Without hyre, if it lay in hys myght
His tythes payde he ful fayre and wel
Bothe of his proper swynke, and of his catel
In a tabarde he rode, vpon a mare
There was also a Reue, and a Millare
A Sompnour, and a Pardoner also
A Manciple, and my selfe, there was no mo.

The Myller. xviii.

THe miller was a stout carle for ỹ nones
Ful big he was of brawne, & eke of bones
That proued wel, for ouer al there he came
At wrastlyng he wolde haue away the Ram
He was short shouldered, a thicke gnarre
Ther nas no doore, but he wolde heue ỹ bar
Of brake it, at a renning with his heed
His berde as any sowe or fore was reed
And therto brode, as it were a spade
Vpon the coppe right of his nose he hade
A werte, and theron stode a tufte of heres
Reed as the bristels of a sowes eres
His nostrils blacke were and wyde
A swerde and a bucklere bare he by hys syde
His mouthe as great was as a furneys
He was a iangler and a goliardeys
And that was moste of synne & of harlotrys
Wel couthe he stele corne, and tolde it thryse
And yet he had a thombe of golde parde
A whyte cote and a blewe hode wered he
A baggepype wel couthe he blowe & sowne
And therwithal brought he vs out of towne.

The Manciple. xix.

A Gentle Manciple there was of ỹ temple
Of which al catours might take ensample
For to ben wyse, in byeng of vitayle
For whether he payde, or took by tayle
Algate he wayted so in hys achate
That he was aye before, in good estate
Now is not that of god a ful fayre grace
That swiche a lewde mans wit shal pace
The wisedome of an heape of lerned men
Of maysters had he mo than thryse ten
That were of lawe expert, and curyous
Of whiche there was a dosen in that house
Worthy to ben stewardes of rent and lande
Of any lorde that is in Englande
To make hym lyue by his proper good
In honour detteles, but yf he were wood
Or lyue as scarsly as hym lyste desyre
And able to helpen al a shyre
In any case that might fallen or happe
And yet the Manciple set al her cappe

The Reue. xx.

THe Reue was a sclender colerike man
His berd was shaue as nie as euer he can
His heer was by his eares rounde ishorn
Hys toppe was docked lyke a preest before
Ful longe were hys legges and ful lene
Ylyke a staffe, there was no calfe ysene
Wel couth he kepe a garner and a bynne
There was non auditour coude on him wynne
Wel wyst he by the drought, and by ỹ rayne
The yelding of his seed, and of his grayne
His lordes sheepe, his neet, and his dayrie
His swine, his horse, his store, and his pultrie
Were hooly in his Reuys gouernyng
And by his couenaunt yaue he rekenyng
Sith his lorde was twenty yere of age
There coude no man bringe hym in arrerage
There nas baylif, herde, ne none other hyne
That he ne knewe his sleight and hys couyne
They were a dradde of him as of the dethe
His dwellynge was ful fayre vpon an heethe
With grene trees shadowed was his place
He couthe better than his lorde purchace
Ful riche he was astored priuely
His lorde he coude wel please subtilly
To yeue and lene him of his owne good
And haue a thanke, and yet a cote and a hood
In youth he had lerned a good mystere
He was a wel good wright, a carpentere
This Reue sate vpon a right good stot
That was al pomel grey, and hight Scot

A long

Bysyde a towne, men clepen it Baldeswel
Tucked he was, as is a frere aboute
And eche he rode hynderest of the route

¶ The Sompnour. xii.

A Sompnour was there wt vs in ꝑ place
That had a fyre red cherubyns face
For sauseme he was, with eyen narowe
As hote he was, and lecherous as a sparowe
With scaled browes blacke, and pylled berde
Of his vysage chyldren were sore aferde
There nas quicksilver, lytarge, ne brymstone
Borax, ceruse, ne oyle of tartre none
Ne oyntment that wolde clense or byte
That hym might helpe of his whelkes white
Ne of his knobbes sitting on his chekes
Wel loued he garlyke, onyons, and eke lekes
And for to drinke strong wyne reed as blood
Then wolde he speke & crie as he were wood
And whan he had wel ydronke the wyne
Than wolde he speke no wordes but latyne
A fewe termes had he, two or thre
That he had lerned out of some decre
No wonder is, he herde it al the daye
And ye knowen wel eke howe that a iaye
Can clepe watte, as wel as can the pope
But who so couthe in other thyng him grope
Than had he spent al hys philosophye
(Aquestio quid iuris) wolde he crye
He was a gentel harlot and a kynde
A better felowe shulde a man nat fynde
He wolde suffre for a quarte of wyne
A good felowe to haue his concubyne
A twelue monthe, and excuse him at the ful
Ful prively eke a fynche couthe he pul
And if he fonde o where a good felawe
He wolde teche hym to haue none awe
In suche case, of the archedekyns curse
But if mans soule were in his purse
For in his purse he shulde ypunyshed be
Purse is the archedekyns hel, sayd he
But wel I wotte he lyed right in dede
Of curshyng oughte eche synful man drede
For curshyng wol slee, right as assoylyng saueth
And also ware him of a Significauit
In dawnger had he at hys owene gyse
The yonge gyrles of the dioceyse
And knew her counsayle, and was of her red
A gerlondе had he set vpon hys hed
As great as it were for an alestake
A bukeler had he maked him of a cake

¶ The Pardoner. xiii.

WIth him there rode a gentle Pardonere
Of Rouncyual, his frend & his compere
That straught was come fro ꝑ court of Rome
Ful loude sōg he, com hyder loue to me
This Sompnour bare him a styfe burdoun
Was neuer trompe of halfe so great a soun
This Pardoner had heer as yelow as wexe
But smoth it hynge, as doth a stricke of flexe
By ounces hynge his lockes that he had
And therwith he hys sholders ouerspradd
But thynne it lay by culpons one and one
But hode for iolyte weared he none
For it was trussed vp in his walet
Him thought he rode al of the newe iet
Dischevelde saue his cappe he rode al bare
Swythe glarynge eyen had he as an hare
A vernacle had he sowed vpon his cappe
His wallet before him in his lappe
Bretful of pardō come from Rome al hote
A voyce he had as smale as hath a gote
No berde had he, ne neuer shulde haue
As smothe it was as it were newe shaue
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare
But of his craft fro Berwyke vnto Ware
Ne was there such another pardonere
For in his male had he a pylowe bere
Which as he sayd, was our ladyes veyle
He sayd he had a gobbet of the seyle
That saynt Peter had whan that he went
Upon the see tyl Jesu Christ him hent
He had a crosse of latoun ful of stones
And in a glasse he had pygges bones
But with these relykes whan that he fonde
A poore person dwellyng vpon londe
Upon a day he gate hym more money
Than that person gate in monethes twey
And thus with fayned flateryng and iapes
He made the person and the people his apes
But trewly to tellen at the laste
He was in the churche a noble ecclesiaste
Wel couthe he rede a lesson or a storye
But alderbest he sange an offertorye
For wel he wyst, whan that songe was songe
He must preche, and wel afyle his tonge
To wynne syluer as he wel conde
Therfore he songe so merely and loude.

Nowe

Now haue I tolde you forthy in a clause
The state, the aray, eche nōbre, & eke the cause
Why that assembled was this company
In fortwerke at this gentel hostelry
That hight the Tabarde fast by the Belle
But nowe is tyme to you for to telle
Howe that we baren vs that ylke nyght
Whan we weren in that hostry a lyght
And after wol I tel of our vyage
And al the remnaunt of our pylgrymage
But firste I pray you of your curtesy
That ye ne arette it nat my folly
Though that I playnly speke in this matere
To tellen you her wordes and eke her chere
Ne though I speke her wordes properly
For this ye knowen as wel as I
Who shal tellen a tale after a manne
He mote reherse as ny as euer he canne
Everyche worde, if it be in hys charge
Al speke he neuer so rudely ne large
Or elis he mote tellen hys tale vntrewe
Or feyne thynges, or fynde wordes newe
He may not spare altho he were his brother
He mote as wel say o worde as another
Chryst spake him selfe ful brode in holy writ
And wel I wotte no vyllany is it
Eke Plato sayth, who so can hym rede
The wordes mote ben cosyn to the dede
Also I pray you forgeue it me
Al haue I nat sette folke in her degre
Here in this tale as they shulde stande
My witte is short ye may wel vnderstande.

Great chere made our host vs everychon
And to the supper sette he vs anon
And serued vs with vitayle at the best
Strong was the wyne, & wel dyrnke vs lest
A semely man our host was with al
For to ben a marshal in a lordes hal
A large man he was with eyen stepe
A fayrer burgeys is there none in Chepe
Bolde of his speche, wyse and wel ytaught
And of manhode him lacked right naught
Eke therto he was a right mery man
And after supper playen he began
And spake of myrthe amonge other thynges
Whan that we had made our rekenynges
And sayd thus, nowe lordynges trewly
Ye ben to me welcome right hertely
For by my trouth if I shulde not lye
I sawe nat this yere so mery a compayne
Atones, in this herbergh as is nowe
Fayn wolde I don you myrth & I wist how
And of a myrth I am right nowe bethought
To don you ease, and it shal coste nought
Ye gone to Canterbury god mote you spede
The bysshul martyr quite you your mede
And wel I wot as ye gone by the way
Ye shapen you to talken and to play
For trewly comforte ne myrth is there none
To ryden by the way as dombe as a stone
And therfore wolde I maken you disporte
As I sayd erst, and done you some comforte
And if you lyketh al by one assent
For to stonden at my iugement
And for to worchen as I shal you say
To morowe whan we ryden on the way
Nowe by my fathers soule that is deed
But ye be mery I wol yeue you my heed
Holde vp your handes without more speche
Our counsayle was not longe for to seche
Vs thought it was not worth to make it wise
And graunted him without more auyse
And bad him say his verdit as him lest
Lordinges (qd he) nowe herkeneth for ỹ best
But take it nat I pray you in disdayne
This is the poynt to speke it plat and playne
That eche of you to shorte with others way
In this viage, shal tel tales tway
To Canterbury warde I meane it so
And homwardes he shall tel tales other two
Of auentures whilom that han befal
And whyche of you that bereth him best of al
That is to sayne, that tellen in this case
Tales of best sentence and most solace
Shal haue a supper at our alder cost
Here in this place sytting by this post
Whan that we comen ayen from Canterbury
And for to make you the more mery
I wil my selfen goodly with you ryde
Right at myne owne cost and be your gyde
And who that wol my iugement withsay
Shal pay al that we spende by the way
And if ye vouchsafe that it be so
Tel me anone without wordes mo
And I wol erly shape me therfore
This thing was graūted & our othes swore
With glad hert, and prayden him also
That he wolde vouchsafe for to do so
And that he wolde ben our gouernour
And of our tales iuge and reportour
And set a supper at a certayne pryse
And we wollen ben ruled at his deuise
In hye and lowe, and thus by one assent
We ben accorded to the iugement.
And therupon the wyne was fette anon

Here dyuerden, and to rest wente ylke one
Ne wiste no man in myn lenger tarynge
Tyll erst our host, and was our alder cocke
And gadered vs al in a flocke
And forth we ryden a lytel more than paas
Unto the watering of saynt Thomas
And there our host began his horse arest
And sayd: lordes herkeneth yf yow lest
Ye wote your forwarde, and I it recorde
Yf ought be lonke and more be recorde
Let se nowe who shal tel the first tale
As euer I more drynke wyne or ale
Whoso is rebel to my iugement
Shal paye for al that by the way is spent
Nowe draweth cutte, for that is myn recorde
Lo we draweth cutte, fro that is myn recorde
Cometh nere (qd he) my lady prioresse
And ye sir clerke, let be your shamefastnesse
Ne studieth not, lay hande thereto euery man
Anone to draw euery wight began
And shortely for to tellen as it was
Were it by auenture, or by shorte cas
The sothe is sayd, the cutte fyl to the knyght
Of whiche ful blythe & glad was euery wight
And telleu he must his tale as it was reason
By forwarde, and by composition
As ye han herde, what nedeth wordes mo
And whan this good man saw that it was so
As he that wyse was and obedyent
To kepen his forwarde by his fre assent
He sayd, sythen I shal begyn the game
Why hat welcome cutte a goddes name
Now let vs ryde, and herkneth what I say
And with ꝑ worde we rydeu forth our way
And he began with right a mery chere
His tale anone, right as ye shal here.

¶ Thus endeth the prologues of the Canterbury tales, and here foloweth the knyghtes tale.

3 DE 64

Whylom, as olde stories tellen vs
There was a duke ỳ hight Theseus
Of Athenes he was lorde and gouernour
And in his tyme swiche a conquerour
That greater was non vnder the son
Ful many a riche countrey had he won
What with his wisedome, and his chevalry
He conquered all the regne of Femmy
That whylom was ycleped Scythea
And wedded the quene Ipolita
And brought her home w̄ him, in to his cōtre
With mykell glory and solempnyte
And eke her yonge suster Emely.
And thus with victory and melody
Let I this worthy duke to Athenes ryde
And all his host, in armes hym besyde.
And certes, if it nere to longe to here
I wolde have told fully the manere
How wonnen was the regne of Femmy
Ỳ Theseus, and by his chevalry
And of the great batayle for the nones
Betwene Athenes and Amalones
And how besieged was Ipolita
The yonge hardy queue of Scithea
And of the feest, ỳ was at her weddyng
And of the tempest at her home cōmyng
But al ỳ thing, I mote as now forbere
I have god worte, a large feste to kepe
And wedded ben the oxen in the plowe
The remenant of my tale is longe nowe
I wyll nat letten eke, nor of this route
Let every felowe tell his tale about
And let se nowe, who shall the supper wyn
And there I lefte, I wyll agayne begyn.
This duke, of whom I make mencyoune
When he was come, almost to the towne
In all his wele and his most pryde
He was ware, as he caste his eye asyde
Where that there kneled in the highe wey
A company of ladys, twey and twey
Eche after other, clādde in clothes blacke
But suche a crie, and suche a wo they make
That in this worlde, nys creature lyuynge
That euer herde suche a waymentynge
And of this crie, they nolde neuer stenten
Tyll they the reynes of his bridell henten
What folke be ye, ỳ at myn home cōmyng
Perturben so my feest with cryeng
Quod Theseus, have ye so great envy
Of myne honour, that thus cōplayne & cry
Or who hath you myshode, or offended
Nowe tellith me, if it may be amended
And why that ye be clothed thus in blacke
The oldest lady of them al spake
When she had sowned w̄ a deedly chere
That it was ruthe for to se and here
She said lorde, to whom fortune hath yeue
Victory, and as a conquerour to lyue
Nought greueth vs your glory & honour
But we beseke you of mercy & socour.
And have mercy on our wo and distresse
Some drope of pyte, through thy gētylnesse
Upon vs wretched wymen, let thou fall
For certes lorde, there nys none of vs all
That she ne hath be a duchesse or a quene
Nowe be we caytyfes, as it is well sene
Thanked be fortune, and her false whele
That non estate assureth for to be wele.
Nowe certes lord, to abyde your presence
Here in this temple of the goddesse Clemence
We have be wayting all this fourtenyght

Were broken, and to reste wente eche one
Withouten any lenger tarying
Amorowe whan they gan to sprynge
Up rose our host, and was our alder cocke
And gadered vs al in a flocke
And forth we ryden a lytel more than paas
Unto the watering of saynt Thomas
And there our host began his horse arest
And sayd: Lordes herkeneth yf you lest
Ye wote your forwarde, and I it recorde
Yf eche songe and morowe songe accorde
Let se nowe who shal tel the first tale
As eche I mote drynke wyne or ale
Who so is rebel to my iugement
Shal paye for al that by the way is spent
Nowe draweth cut or that ye farther twyn
The which that hath the shortest shal begyn.

Sir knyght (quoth he) my mayster & my lorde
Nowe draweth cutte, for that is myn acorde
Cometh nere (quoth he) my lady prioresse
And ye sir clerke, let be your shamefastnesse
Ne studieth not, lay hande thereto every man
Anone to drawe every wight began
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Vide Wecever Funer: Mon: pag. 728.

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And wedded the quene Ipolita
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And of the great batayle for the nones
Betwene Atheues and Amasones
And how besteged was Ipolita
The yonge hardy quene of Cithea
And of the feest, ỳ was at her weddyng
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But al ỳ thing, I mote as now forbere
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And wekedly ben the oxen in the plowe
The remenant of my tale is longe nowe
My pyll nat letten eke, non of this rout
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Nowe certes lord, to abyde your presẽce
Here in this temple of the goddesse Clemẽce
We have be wayting all this fourtenyght

Helpe hem lorde, sythe it lyeth in thy myght.

I pray the, that wepe and wayle thus
As ydyon wife to kyng Campaneus
That starfe at Thebes, cursed be ꝑ day
And all we that ben in this aray
And maken all this lamentacyon
Wol lasten all oure lyues at that towne
Wo lyke that the syege there aboute laye
And yet the olde Creon (wel awaye)
That lorde is nowe of Thebes cite
Fulfylled of yre and of iniquite
He for dispyte, and for his tyrannye
To done the deed bodyes vylanye
Of all our lordes, whiche that ben slawe
Hath all the bodyes on an heape ydrawe
And wyll nat suffre hem, by none assent
Neyther to be buryed, ne to be brent
But maketh houndes to eate hem in dispyte
And ꝑ with wonde, without more respite
They fallen grouelyng, and crien pitously
Helpe on vs wrecched wymmen some mercy
And let our sorowe synke in thine herte.

This gentle duke downe from his horse sterte
With herte pytous, whan he herde hem speke
Hym thought that his herte wolde breke
Whan he sawe hem so pytous and so mate
That whylom were of so great astate
And in his armes, he hem all vp hente
And hem comforted in full good entente
And swore his othe, as he was true knyght
He wolde don so ferforthly his myght
Upon the tyraunt Creon hem to wreake
That all the people of Grece shulde speake
Howe Creon was of Theseus yserued
As he that had his deth full well deserued
And ryght anon without more abode
His baner he displayed, and forth rode
To Thebes warde, and al his hoost besyde
No nere Athenes nolde he go ne ryde
Ne take his ease fully halfe a day
But onward on his way that nyght he laye
And sent anone Ypolita the queene
And Emely her yonge suster shene
Vnto the towne of Athenes to dwell
And forth he rydeth, ther nys no more to tel

The rede statu of Mars with spere and targe
So shyneth in his white baner large
That al the feldes glyttren vp and doun
And by his baner, borne is his penon
Of golde ful riche, in which there was ybete
The mynotaure, that he wan in Crete

Thus ryden this duke, this conqueroure
And in his hoste of chyualry the flour
Tyll that he came to Thebes, and alyght
Faire in a feelde, ther as he thought to fyght
But shortly for to speken of this thyng
With Creon, whiche was of Thebes kyng
He faught, and slewe him manly as a knyght
In playne batayle, and put his folke to flyght
And at a saute he wan the cyte after
And rente adowne wall, sparre, and rafter
And to the ladyes he restored agayn
The bodyes of her husbandes ꝑ were slayn
To done obsequies, as tho was the gyse
But it were all to longe for to deuyse
The great clamour, and the wofulle wayng
That the ladyes made at the brennyng
Of the bodyes, and the great honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour
Doth to ꝑ ladies, whan they from him wente
But shortly to tellen is myne entente
Whan ꝑ this worthy duke, this Theseus
Hath Creon slayne, and wan Thebes thus
Stylle in the feelde he toke all nyght his rest
And dyd with all the countre as him lest
To ransake in the taas of bodyes dede
(hem for to stripe of harneys and of wede)
The pyllours dyd her busynesse and cure
After the batayle and the discomfyture
And so fel, that in the taas they founde
Thrugh gyrt with many a grenous wounde
Two yonge knyghtes lyeng by and by
Both in armes fame, wrought full richely
Of whiche two, Arcyte hyght that one
And that other hight Palamon
Not fully quycke, ne fully deed they were
But by her cote armours, and by her gere
The heraudes knewe hem best in specyall
As tho that weren of the bloode ryall
Of Thebes, and of systren two yborne
Out of the taas ꝑ pyllours hath hem torne
And han hem caryed softe in to the tente
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
To Athenes, to dwellen there in prison
Perpetuell, he nolde hem not raunson
And whan this worthy duke had thus don
He toke his hoost, and home he gothe anon
With laurer crowned, as a conquerour
And there he lyueth in ioye and honour
Terme of his lyfe, what neded wordes mo
And in a towre, in angwyshe and in wo
Dwelleth Palamon, and his felowe Arcyte
For euermore, there may no gold hem q

THus passeth yere by yere, & day by day
Tyll it fell ones in a morowe of May
That Emely, that fayrer was to sene
Than is the lylly, vpon the stalke grene
And fresher than May, with floures newe
For with the rose colour strof her hewe
I not whiche was the fayrer of hem two
Er it was day, as was her won to do
She was aryssen, and all redy dyght
For May wolde haue no slogardy a nyght
The season pricketh euery gentell herte
And maketh it out of his slepe sterte
And sayth aryse, and do May obseruaunce
This maketh Emely to haue remembraunce
To done honour to May, and for to ryse
I clothed was she freshe for to deuyse
Her yelowe heare was broyded in a tresse
Behynde her backe, a yerde longe I gesse
And in the gardyn at sonne vprysyt
She walketh vp and downe as her lyst
She gathereth floures, party whyte & reed
To make a subtell garlande for her heed
And as an angell, heuenly she songe
The great tour, that was so thycke & stronge
Whiche of the castell was the chefe dungeon
Ther in the knyghtes were in prison
Of whiche I tolde you, and tell shall
Was euyn ioynaunt to the garden wall
There as this Emely had her playeng
Bright was the sonne, & clere that morwenyng
And Palamon, this wofull prisoner
As was his won, by leaue of his gayler
Vpas ryssen, & romed in a chambre on hyghe
In whiche he all the noble cyte syghe
And eke the gardyn, full of braunches grene
There as this freshe Emely the shene
Vpas in her walke, & romed vp and down.
This sorowfull prisoner, this Palamon
Gothe in his chambre romyng to and fro
And to hym selfe complaynyng of his wo
That he was borne, full ofte sayd alas
And so befell by auenture or caas
That through a window thick of many a bar
Of yren great, & square as any spar
He cast his eyen vpon Emelia
And therwith he blent and cryed, ha.
As thoughe he stongen were to the herte.
And with that crye Arcite anon vp sterte
And sayd, cosyn myne, what eyleth the
That art so pale and deedly for to se?
why cryest thou? who hath do the offence?
For goddes loue, take all in patience
Our prison, for it maye none other be
Fortune hath yeuen vs this aduersite
Some wicked aspect or disposicion
Of Saturne, by some constellacyon
Hath yeuen vs this, all tho we had it swore
So stode the heuen, when ỳ we were borne
We mote endure this is short and playn.
This Palamon answerde, & sayde agayn:
Cosyn forsoth, of this opinion
Thou hast a vayne ymagynacion
This prison caused me not to crye.
But I was hurt right now thrugh myn ey
Into myne hert, that will my bane be
The fayrnesse of a lady that I se
Yonde in the gardyn, romyng to and fro
Is cause of all my cryeng and wo
I not wher she be woman or goddesse
But Venus it is, soothly as I gesse
And therwith all on knees down he fyll
And sayd: Venus, if it be thy wyll
You in this garden, thus to transfygure
Before me, sorowfull wretched creature
Out of this prison helpe that we may scape
And if our destenye be so shape
By eterne worde, to dyen in prison
Of our lynage haue some compassion
That is so low ybrought by tyranny.
And with that worde Arcite gan espy
Where as the lady romed to and fro
And with that sight her bewte hurt hym so
That if that Palamon were wounded sore
Arcite was hurt as moche as he, or more
And with a syghe he said pitously
The freshe beutie sleeth me sodenly
Of her that cometh in yonder place
And but I haue her mercy and her grace
That I may seen her at the leste way
I nam but ded, there lys no more to say.

This Palamō, whā he these wordes herd
Dispytously he loked, and answerd:
Whether sayest thou this i erneste or in play
Nay quod Arcite, in erneste by my fay
God helpe me so, me lyst full yuell to play
This Palamō gan knit his browes twey
It were (quod he) to the no great honour
To be false, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosyn & thy brother
I swore full depe, and eche of vs to other
That neuer for to dyen in the payne
Tyll that the deth departe vs twayne
Neyther of vs in loue to hynder other
Ne in none other case my leue brother
But that thou shuldest truly further me

In euery cafe, as I ſhulde further the
This was thyn ordre, and myn alſo certayn
I wote it well, thou darſt it not withſayn
Thus art thou of my coũſell out of doubte
And nowe thou wouldeſt falſly ben aboute
To louemy lady, whom I loue and ſerue
And euer ſhall, tyll that myn herte ſterue.
Now certes falſe Arcite thou ſhalte not ſo
I loued her firſt, and tolde the my wo
As to my counſtil, & to my brother ſwo3ne
To further me, as I haue tolde before
For whiche thou art ibounden, as a knyght
To helpen me, if it lye in thy myght
Or elſ artt thou falſe, I dare well ſaine.
This Arcite full proudly ſpake agayne.
Thou ſhalt (quod he) be rather falſe than I
And thou arte falſe I tellethe vtterly.
For paramour I loued her firſt or thou
What wilte ꝓ ſayn, thou wiſt it nat or now
Whether ſhe be woman or goddeſſe
Thyne is affection of holynneſſe
And myne is loue, as to a creature
For whyche I tolde the myn auenture
As to my coſyn, and my brother ſwo3ne.
Suppoſe that thou loued ſt her byfo3ne
Woſt thou not well the olde clerkes ſawe
That, who ſhall gyue a louer any lawe
Loue is a greter lawe by my pan
Than may be yeuen to any erthly man
And therfo3e poſityfe lawe, and ſuche decre
Is broken all day for loue in eche degre
A man mote nedes loue maugre his heed
He may nat flee it though he ſhuld be deed
All be ſhe mayde, wydowe, or wyfe
And eke it is not lykely all thy lyfe
To ſtonden in her grace, nomo3e ſhall I
For well thou woſt thy ſelfe verely
That thou and I be dampned to priſon
perpetuell, bs gayneth no raunſon.
We ſtriuen, as did the houndes for the bone
That foughte all day, & yet her part was non
Ther came a cur, while ꝓ they wer ſo wroth
And bare away the bone from hem both
And therfore, at lyngges court my brother
Eche man for him ſelfe, there is none other
Loue if thou tyll, for I loue and ay ſhall
And ſothly leue brother this is all
Here in this priſon mote we endure
And euerych of vs take his auenture.
Great was the ſtrife and long betwix hem twey
If that I had leyſer for to ſey
But to theffect, it happed on a day
To tell it you ſhortly as I may.
A worthy duke that hyght Perithous.
That felowe was to duke Theſeus
Syth thylke day ꝓ they were children lyte
Was come to Athenes, his felowe to viſyte
And for to play, as he was wonte to do
For in this worlde he loued no man ſo
And he loued him as tenderly agayne
So well they loued, as olde bokes ſayne
That whan ꝓ one was dede, ſothly to tell
His felow went & ſought him down in hell
But of that ſtory lyſt me not to write.
Duke Perithous loued well Arcite
And had him know at Thebes yere by yere
And finally at requeſt and prayere
Of Perithous, withouten any raunſon
Duke Theſeus let him out of priſon
Freely to gon, whither him lyſt ouer all
In ſuche a gyſe, as I you tellen ſhall.
This was ꝓ forwarde, playnly to endyte
Betwyx duke Theſeus and him Arcyte
That if ſo were, that Arcite were yfounde
Euer in his lyfe, by day, nyght or ſtounde
In any coũtre of this duke Theſeus
And he were caught it was acorded thus
That with a ſwerde he ſhuld leſe his heed
There was none other remedy ne reed
But taketh his leaue, & homward him ſpedd
Let him beware, his necke lyeth to wedde
Howe great ſorow ſuffreth now e Arcite
The dethe he feleth through his hert ſmyte
He wepeth, wailleth, & crieth pitouſly
To ſleen him ſelfe he waiteth priuely
And ſaid, alas the day that I was borne
Now is my priſon worſe than before
Now is me ſhapen eternally to dwell
Nought in purgatory, but in hell
Alas that euer I knewe Perithous
For els had I dwelt with Theſeus
Ifetered in his priſon euermo
Then had I be in blyſſe, and nat in wo
Onely the ſyght of her, whom that I ſerue
Though ꝓ I neuer her grace may deſerue
Wolde haue ſuffiſed ryghte ynough for me
O dere coſyn Palamon (quod he)
Thine is the victory of this auenture
Full blyſſfull in priſon mayſt thou endure
In priſon, May certes but in paradyſe
Wel hath fortune to the turned the byſe
That haſt the ſyght of her, and I thabſence
For poſſible is, ſithens thou haſt her preſẽce
And arte a knyght, a worthy man & able
That by ſõe caſe, ſyn fortune is chaũgeable
Thou mayſt ſometyme to thy deſyre attayne
But

But I that am exiled, and barayne
Of all grace, and in so great dispeyre
That ther nys water, erthe, fyre, ne eyre
Ne creature, that of hem maked is
That may me helpe, or done comfort in thys
Wel ought I sterue in wanhope & distresse
Farwell my lyfe, my lust, & my gladnesse
Alas, why playnen men so in commune
Of purueyaunce of god, or of fortune
That yeueth hem full ofte in many agyfe
Wel bette than hem selfe can deuyse
Some man desyreth to haue richesse
That cause is of his murdre or sykenesse
And some man wold out of his prison fayne
That in his house, is of his meyne slayne
Infinite harmes bene in this matere
We wote not what thing we prayen here
We faren as he that dronke is as a mouse
A dróken man woten wel, he hath an house
But he wot not, which the right way thyder
And to a dronken man the way is slyder
And certes in this worlde so faren we
We seken fast after felicite
But we go wronge full ofte trewly
Thus we may saye all, and namely I
That wenden, and had a great opinion
That if I myght scape fro prison
Than had I ben in ioye and parfite hele
There nowe I am exiled fro my wele
Sith that I may nat seen you Emely
I nam but dead, there nys no remedy.
¶ Upon that other syde Palamon
Wha that he wist Arcite was gon
Such sorowe he maketh, that the great toure
Resowned of his yelling and clamour
The pure fetters on his shynnes grete
Were of his bytter salte teares wete
Alas (quod he) Arcite cosyn myne
Of all our strife, god wot the frute is thyne
Thou walkest nowe in Thebes at large
And of my wo, thou yeuest lytell charge
Thou maist, sith thou hast wysedom & manhede
Assemble all the folke of our kynrede
And make warre so sharpe in this countre
That by some auenture, or by some treate
Thou maist haue her to lady and to wyfe
For whom I must nedes lese my lyfe
For as by way of possibilite.
Sithe thou arte at thy large of prison free
And art a lorde, great is thyne auauntage
More than is myn, that sterue here in a rage
For I may wepe & wayle, whiles that I lyue
With all the wo that prison may me yeue
And eke with payne, that loue yeueth me also
That doubleth all my tourment and my wo
Therwith the fire of ielousy up stert
Within his brest, and hent him by the hert
So wondly, that he likely was to beholde
The boxe tree, or the asshen dede and colde
Than said he. O cruell goddes, that gouerne
This worlde with your worde eterne
And writen in the table of Athamant
Your parlament and eterne graunt
What is mankynde more vnto you holde
Than is the shepe, that rouketh in the folde
For slayne is man, right as a nother beest
And dwelleth eke in prison, and in arrest
And hath sickenesse, and great aduersite
And oft tyme giltelesse parde.
What gouernance is in this prescience
That giltelesse tormenteth innocence?
And encreaseth thus all my penaunce
That man is bounden to his obseruaunce
For gods sake to letten of his wyll
There as a beest may all his lustes fulfyll
And whan a beest is dede, he hath no payn
But after his deth man mote wepe & playn:
Though in this worlde he haue care and wo
Without doute it may stonden so.
The answere of this lete I to dyuynes
But well I wote, in this worlde grete pine is
Alas I se a serpent or a theefe
That many a true man hath do mischefe
Goon at his large, & where him lyst may turne
But I mote ben in prison thrugh Saturne
And eke thrugh Juno, ialous & eke wood
That hath stroyed well nye all the blood
Of Thebes, with his wall walles wyde
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For ielousye, and feare of him Arcite.
Nowe wyll I stynte of Palamon a lyte
And let him in his prison stylle dwell
And of Arcite forth woll I you tell.
The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encreseth double wise the paynes stronge
Both of the louer, and of the prisoner
I not which hathe the wofulier mester
For shortly to say, this Palamon
Perpetuell is dampned to prison
In chaynes and fetters to the deed
And Arcite is exiled on his heed
For euermore as out of that countre
Ne neuer more shall his lady se
Yow louers aske I nowe this questyon
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon
That one maye se his lady day by day

But in prison mote he dwell alway
That other where him lyst may ride or go
But sene his lady shall he neuer mo
Nowe demeth as ye lyst, ye that can
For I woll tell forth my tale as I began.
Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was
Full ofte a day he swelte and sayd alas
For sene his lady shall he neuer mo
And shortely to conclude, all his wo
So mykell sorowe made neuer creature
That is or shalbe, whyle ỹ world may endure
His slepe, his meate, his drinke is him byraft
That leane he wexeth, & drye as a shaft
His eyen holow, and grisly to beholde
His hewe pale, and falowe as asshen colde
And solitary he was, and euer alone
And wayling all the nyght, makynge mone
And if he herde songe or instrument
Then would he wepe, he myght not stent
So feble were his spirites, and so lowe
And chaũged so, ỹ no mã coude him knowe
His speche ne his voice, though mẽ it herde
As in his gyre, for al the worlde it ferde
Nought comly lyke to louers maladye
Of Hereos, but rather lyke manye
Engendred of humours melancolyke
Before his celle fantastyke
And shortely was turned all vp so doun
Bothe habyte and disposycion
Of him, this wofull louer Arcyte
what shulde I all day of his wo endyte
whan he endured had a yere or two
This cruell torment, & this payne and wo
At Thebes in his countre, as I sayde
Upon a nyght in slepe as he him layde
Him thought howe ỹ the wynged Mercury
Before him stode, & bad him be mery
His slepy yerde in hande he bare vpryght
An hatte he wered vpon his heares bryght
Arayed was this god, as he toke kepe
As he was, whan Argus toke his slepe
And saide hi thus: to Athenes shalt ỹ wende
There is the shapen of thy wo an ende
And with that word Arcite awoke & stert
Nowe truely howe sore that me smert
Quod he, to Athenes right now wol I fare
Ne for no drede of death shal I spare
To se my lady, that I loue and serue
In her presence recke I not to sterue.
And vp that word he caught a great mystrour
And sawe that chaunged was al his colour
And sawe his visage all in a nother kynde
And ryght anon it ran him in his mynde
That sith his face was so disfygured
Of malady, the whiche he had endured
He myght well, yt that he bare him lowe
Lyue in Athenes euermore vnknowe
And sene his Lady wel nigh day by day
And right anon he chaunged his aray
And clad him as a pore labourer
And all alone, saue oncly a squier
That knewe his priuitie and al his cas
whiche was disgised porely as he was
To Athenes is he gon the next way
And to the court he went vpon a day
And at the gate he profered his seruice
To drugge & draw, what men wold deuise
And shortely of thys matter for to sayne
He fell in office with a chamberlayne
The whiche was dwelling with Emelye
For he was wise, and soone couth espye
Of euery seruaunt, which that serued here
well couth he hewen wode, & water bere
For he was yong and mighty for the nones
And therto he was strong & bygge of bones
To done that any wyght can him deuise
A yere or two he was in this seruice
Page of the chamber, of Emelye the bright
And Philostrate he sayed that he hight
But half so welbeloued man as he
Ne was there none in court, of his degre
He was so gentyl of condicion
That through all the court was his renon
They said that it were a charitie
That Theseus wold enhaunce his degre
And put him in a worshipfull seruice
There as he might hys vertue exercise
And thus vnto a whyle his name is spronge
Both of his dedes, and of his good tonge
That Theseus hath taken him so nere
That of his chamber he made him squiere
And yaue him gold to mayntaine his degre
And eke men brought him out of his contre
Fro yere to yere full priuely his rent
But honestly and slyly he it spent
That no man wondered how he it had
And thre yere in this wyse his lyke he ladde
And bare him so in peace & eke in werre
Ther was no man that Theseus hathe der
And in this blysse let I nowe Arcite
And speake I woll of Palamon a lyte
In darkenesse horrible and strong prison
This seuen yere hath sitten this Palamon
Forpyned, what for wo and distresse
Who feleth double sore and heuinesse
But Palamon: that loue distrayneth so

That

That wode out of his wit, he goeth for wo
And eke therto he is a prisonere
Perpetuel, and not onely for a yere.
Who coud ryme in englishe properly
His martyrdome, forsoth it am not I
Therfore I passe as lyghtly as I may.
It befel that in the seuenth yere in may
The thirde night, as olde bokes sayne
(That all this storye telleth more playne)
Were it by aduenture or by destyne
As when a thyng is shapen, it shalbe
That soone after midnight, Palamon
By helpyng of a frende brake his prison
And fleeth the cite, as fast as he may go
For he had yeue the gayler drinke so
Of a clarry, made of certayne wyne
With narcotyse and opye, of Thebes fyne
That al ỳ night though mē wold him shake
The gayler slept, he nughte not awake
And thus he fleeth as fast as he may.
The nyght was shorte, & fast by the day
That nedes cost he mote hymselfe hyde.
And to a groue fast there besyde
With dredfull fote than stalketh Palamon
For shortely this was hys opinion
That in ỳ groue he wolde hym hide al day
And in the night then would he take his way.
To Thebes warde, his frendes for to prye
On Theseus to helpe him to warrye
And shortly, either he wold lese hys life
Or wynne Emely vnto his wyfe
This is the effect, and his entent playne.
Now wyll I turne to Arcite agayne
That litell wyst how nye was his care
Till ỳ fortune had brought him in her snare
The mery larke, messanger of the day
Salueth in her songe the morow gray
And fyry Phebus riseth vp so bright
That all the orisont laugheth of the sight
And with his stremes, dryeth in the greues
The syluer droppes, hangyng in the leues.
And Arcite, that in the court reall
With Theseus hys squier principall
Is risen, and loketh on the mery day
And for to don his obseruaunces to may
Remembryng on the poynt of hys desire
He on his courser, startling as the fire
Is riden into the feldes hym to play
Out of the court, were it a myle or twey
And to the groue of whiche I you tolde
By aduenture, hys way he gan holde
To maken him a garlonde of the greues
Were it of woodbynde or hawthorn leues
And loud he songe ayenst the sonne shene:
May, with all thy flowres and thy grene
Welcom be thou fayre freshe may
I hope that I some grene get may
And from hys courser, with a lusty hearte
Into the groue full hastely he sterte
And in a path he romed vp and down
There, as by aduenture thys Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might hym se
For sore afrayed of death was he
Nothing ne knewe he that it was Arcite
God wote he wolde haue trowed full lite
But soth is sayed, go sithen many yeres
That feld hath eyen, and wode hath eres
It is full fayre a man to beare hym euyn
For all day men mete at vnset steuyn
Full lytill wote Arcite of thys felawe
That was so nigh to herken of his sawe
For in the bushe sitteth he nowe full styll
When that Arcite had romed al his fill
And songen all the roundell lustely
Into a study he fell sodenly
As don these louers in their quevnt gyses
Now in the croppe, & now down in ỳ brires
Now vp nowe downe, as boket in a well
Right as the friday, soothly for to tell
Now it fareth nowe it shyneth fast
Right so gan gery Venus ouercast
The hearres of her folke, right as her day
Is gerysull, ryght so chaungeth she aray
Selde is the friday al the weke lyke
When ỳ Arcite had song, he gan to syke
And set hym downe withoute vi any more
Alas (quod he) the day that I was bore
How longe Juno throngh thy cruelte
Wylt thou waren Thebes the cite
Alas ỳbrought is to confusion
The blonde reall of Cadmus & Amphion
Of Cadmus, which was the first man
That Thebes built, or first the towne began
And of the cite first was crowned kynge
Of his lynage am I, and of his spryngе
Ybery lyne, as of the stocke ryall
And nowe I am so caytife and so thrall
That he that is my mortall enemy
I serue hym, as his squier poorely
And yet doeth me Juno well more shame
For I dare nat be know myn owen name
But there as I was wont to highte Arcite
Now highte I Philostrat nat worth a myte
Alas thou fell Mars, alas thou Juno
Thus hath youre yre our lynage all for do
Saue onely me, and wretched Palamon

That Theseus martreth in prison
And euer alle thys, to sterne me vtterly
Loue hath his fyry dart so brennyngly
I stycked thrugh my true carefull hert
That shapen was my deth erst my shert
Ye sterne me with youre eyen Emelye
Ye ben the cause wherfore I dye
Of all the remenaunt of myn other care
Ne tee I nat the mountaunce of a tare
So ỳ I coud do ought to your pleasaunce
And with ỳ worde he fell down in a traūce
A longe tyme, and afterwarde he vp stert
This Palamon thought ỳ thrugh his hert
He felt a colde swoorde sodenly glyde
For yre he quoke, no lenger would he abide
And when that he had herd Arcites tale
As he were wode, with face deed and pale
He stert him vp, out of the bushes thicke
And sayd: Arcite false traytour wicke
Nowe art thou hent, that lourst my lady so
For whom that I haue thys payne & wo
And art my blod, and to my counsell swoorn
As I haue full oft tolde the here beforn
And hast be iaped here duke Theseus
And falsely hast chaunged thy name thus
I wyll be ded, or els thou shalt dye
Thou shalt not loue my lady Emelye
But I wol loue her onely and no mo
For I am Palamon thy mortall fo
Though ỳ I haue no weapen in this place
But out of prison am astert by grace
I dred nāt, that either thou shalt dye
Or thou ne shalt nat louen Emelye
Chese which thou wilt, or ỳ shalt not astert
This Arcite, with full dispytous hert
Whan he him knewe, & had his tale herde
As fers as a Lion, pulled out his swerde
And sayd: By god that sitteth aboue
Ne were ỳ thou art sicke, & wod for loue
And eke that ỳ no weapen hast in this place
Thou shouldest neuer out this groue pace
That thou ne shouldest dien ek myn honde
For I defye the suertie and the bonde
Whiche ỳ thou sayest ỳ I haue made to the
What verry fole, thinke wel that loue is fre
And I wyll loue her maugre al thy might
But for asmuche as thou art a knyght
And wylnest to haren here by battayle
Haue here my truth, to morowe I wyl not
Without wityng of any other wight (fayle
That here I wyll be founden as a knyght
And bringen harneys, right ynough for the
And horse the best, & leaue the worst for me
And meate & drinke, this night wyl I bring
Inough for the, & clothes for thy bedding
And if so be that thou my lady wyn
And slee me in thys wodde there I am in
Thou mayst well haue thy lady as for me.
This Palamon answerde, I graūt it the
And thus they ben departed till a morowe
Whē eech of hem had laid his faith to borowe
O Cupide out of all charitie
O regne, ỳ wouldest haue no felowe with the
Full soth is sayd, that loue ne lordship
Wol nat his thankes haue any felyshyp
Wel fynde that of Arcite and Palamon
Arcite is ridden anon into the toun
And on the morow or it were day light
Full prively two harneys hath he dyght
Both sufficient and mete to darreygne
The battayle in ỳ felde betwix hem tweyne
And on his horse, alone as he was borne
He carieth all his harneys hym beforne
And in the groue, at tyme and place ystette
That Arcite and thys Palamon ben mette
To chaungen gan the colour in her face
Right as the hunter in ỳ regne of Trace
That standeth at a gappe, with a speare
Whan hunted is the Lion or the beare
And herketh hym rushyng in the leues
And breaketh the bowes in the greues
And thinketh, here cometh my mortal enemy
Without fayle, he must be ded or I
For either I mote slee hym at the gappe
Or he mote slee me, yf me mishappe
So ferden they, in chaunging of her hewe
As farre as euerych of other knewe
There nas no good day, ne no saluing
But streyght, without worde or rehersyng
Euerych of hem helpeth for to arme other
As frendly, as he were his owne brother
And after that, with sharpe speares strong
They foynen eche at other wonder long
Thou mightest wenen, that thys Palamon
In his fighting, were a wodde Lion
And as a cruell tygre was Arcite
As wilde bores gan they fight and smyte
That frothen white as fome for yre wood
Up to the ancle foughten they in her bloode
And in this wise, I let hem fyghting dwel
And forth I wol of Theseus you tell.
The deseyse and the minister generall
That executeth in the worlde ouer all
The purueyaunce, ỳ god hath sayd beforne
So strōg it is, ỳ though ỳ world had swore
The contrary of thinge by ye and nay

Yet

Yet some tyme it shal fall on a day
That fell neuer yet in a thousand yere
For certaynly our appetites here
Be it of warre, peace, hate, or loue
All is ruled by the syght aboue
This meane I nowe by mighty Theseus
That for to hunt is so desirous
And namely at the great harte in may
That in his bed there daweth hym day
That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunt and horne, & hundes hym beside
For in his hunting hath he suche delite
That it is all his ioy and appetite
To ben hym selfe the great heartes bane
For after Mars, he serueth nowe Diane
Clere was the day, as I haue told or thys
And Theseus, with all ioy and blys
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene
And Emely, yclothed all in grene
On huntyng ben they ridden royally
And to the groue, that stode there fast by
In which ther was an hart, as me him told
Duke Theseus the streyght way hath hold
And to the launde, he rydeth hym full ryght
For thider was ỹ hart wõt to haue his slight
And ouer a broke, & so forth on his wey
This duke wol haue a cours at him or twey
With houndes, suche as him list cõmaunde
And whe ỹ duke was comen into ỹ launde
Under the sonne he loked, and that anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon
That fought ẽ breme, as it were bulles two
The bright swordes wenten to and fro
So hydously, that with the lest stroke
It semed, that it wold haue fellen an oke
But what they weren, nothing he ne wote
This duke w his spores his courser smote
And at a start he was betwixt hem two
And pulled out his sworde, and cried, ho
No more, on payne of lesinge your heed
By myghtie Mars, he shall anone be deed
That smiteth any stroke, that I maye sene
But telleth me, what myster men ye bene
That ben so hardy for to fighten here
Wythout iudge or other officere
As though it were in lystes royally
Thys Palamon answerd hastely
And sayd: sir, what nedeth wordes mo
We haue the deth deserued bothe two
Two wofull wretches ben we & caytiues
That ben encombred of oure owne liues
And as thou art a ryghtfull lord & iudge
Ne yeue vs neither mercy ne refuge
But slee me first, for saynt charitie
But slee my felowe as well as me
Or slee him first, for though thou knowest lite
This is thy mortall foe, this is Arcite
That fro thy land is banished on his heed
For which he hath deserued to be deed
For this is he, that came vnto thy gate
And sayd, that he hight Philistrate
Thus hath he iaped full many a yere
And thou hast made hym thy chefe squiere
And this is he, that loueth Emely.
For sith the daye is come that I shal dye
I make playnly my confession
I am thylke wofull Palamon
That hath thy prison broke wickedly
I am thy mortall foe, and he am I
That loueth so hotte Emely the bright
That I wol dye here present in her syght
Wherfore I aske deth and my iewyse
But slee my felowe in the same wise
For both we haue deserued to be slayne.
This worthy duke answerd anon againe
And sayd, thys is a short conclusion
Your owne mouth, by your confession
Hath damned you, and I wol it record
It nedeth not to pyne you with a corde
Ye shall be deed by myghty Mars the red
The quene anone for very woman hed
Gan for to wepe, and so dyd Emelye
And all the ladies in the companye
Great petie was it, as thought hem all
That euer suche a chaunce should befall
For gentylmen they were of great estate
And nothyng but for loue was thys debate
And sawe her blody woundes wide & sore
And all criden bothe lesse and more
Haue mercy lorde vpon vs wemen all
And on her bare knees downe they fall
And would haue kyst his fete there he stode
Tyll at the last, aslaked was his mode
For pyte renneth soone in gentle hert
And though he firste for ire quoke and sterte
He hathe considered shortly in a clause
The trespasses of hem bothe, & eke the cause
And although his ire her gilt accused
Yet in his reason he hem both excused
As thus: he thought well that euery man
Wol helpe hym selfe in loue all that he can
And eke deliuer hym selfe out of prison
And eke his heart had compassion
Of wymen, for they wepen euery in one
And in his gentle heart he thought anone
And softe vnto hymselfe he sayd: fy

Upon a lorde that woll haue no mercy
But be a lyon, bothe in worde and dede
To hem that ben in repentaūce & drede
As well as to a proude despitous man
That wyll mayntayne that he fyrst began
That lorde hath wyt yll of discrecion
That in suche case can no difference
But wayeth pryde and humblesse after one
And shortly, whan his yre was thus agone
He gan to loken vp with eyen lyght
And spake these wordes all on hyght.
The god of loue, ah, benedicite
Howe mighty, and howe great a lorde is he
Ayain his might ther gayneth no obstacles
He may be cleaped a god for his miracles
For he can maken at his owne gyse
Of euerych heart, as hym lyst deuise
Lo here thys Arcite, and this Palamon
That quietly were out of my prison gon
And might haue lyued in Thebes ryally
And knowen I am her mortall enemy
And that her deth is in my power also
And yet hath loue, maugre her eyen two
Brought hem hyther bothe for to dye
Nowe loketh, is nat thys a grete folye?
Who may be a fole, but yf he loue?
Beholde for goddes sake, that sitteth aboue
Se how they blede, be they nat wel arayd
Thus hath her lord, the god of loue hem payd
Her wages, & her fees for her seruise
And yet they wenen to be full wyse
That serue loue, for ought that may befall
But yet is this the best game of all
That she, for whom they haue this iolite
Can hem therfore, as muche thanke as me
She wote no more of all thys hote fare
By god, than wote a cokowe or an hare
But all mote ben assayed hote and colde
A man mote nede a fole other yong or olde
I wotte it by my selfe ful yore agone
For in my tyme, a seruaunt was I one
And therfore sith I knowe of loues payne
I wotte howe sore it can a man distrayne
As he that oft hath ben caught in her laas
I you forgeue all hooly thys trespaas.
At the requeste of the quene, that kneleth here
And eke of Emely, my suster dere
And ye shall both anon vnto me swere
That ye shal neuer more my countre dere
Ne make warre vpon me nyght ne day
But ben my frendes in all that ye may
I you forgeue this trespas euery dele
And they him swore his asking faire & wele
And hym of lordshyp & of mercy prayed
And he hem graunted grace, & thus he sayd.

To speake of worthy lynage & rychesse
Though that she were a quene or a princesse
Eche of you bothe is worthy douteles
To wed when tyme is, but nethelesse
I speake, as for my suster Emely
For whom ye haue this strife & ielosy
Ye wote your selfe, she may not wedde two
At ones, though ye fyghten euer mo
But one of you, all be him lothe or leefe
He mote go pype in an yue leefe
This is to say, she may not haue bothe
Al be ye neuer so ielous, ne so wrothe
And therfore I you put in thys degre
That eche of you shall haue his destyne
As hym is shape, and herken in what wyse
Lo here your ende, of that I shall deuise.
My wyll is thys, for plat conclusion
Without any replicacion.
If that you lyketh, taketh it for the best
That euerych of you shal go where hym lest
Frely, without ransome or daunger
And this day fifty wekes, ferre ne nere
Euerych of you shal bryng an. C. knyghtes
Armed for the lystes vpon all rightes
Al redy to darreyn here by battayle
And this behote I you withouten fayle
Upon my trueth, as I am true knyght
That whether of you both hath that might
That is to saye, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spake of now
Sle his contrary, or out of lestes dryue
Hym shal I yeue Emely to wyue
To whom that fortune yeueth so faire a grace
The lestes shall I maken in this place
And god so wysely on my soule rewe
As I shal euen iudge be, and trewe
Ye shall non other ende with me make
That one of you shalbe ded or take
And ye thinken this is well ysayd
Sayth your auise, & holde you wel apayd
Thys is your ende, and your conclusion
Who loketh lightly nowe but Palamon?
Who springeth vp for ioye but Arcite?
Who coude tell, or who coude endite?
The ioy that is made in this place
When Theseus had don so fayre a grace
But doun on knees wēt euery maner wight
And thanked him, with al her hert & myght
And namely these Thebans many a sithe
And thus with good hope and hert blithe

They

They take her hewe, & hõward gan they ride
To Thebes ward, with olde walles wide
I trawe men would deme it negligence
yf I forgeten to tell the dispence
Of Theseus, that goeth busely
To maken vp the lystes ryally
That suche a noble Theatre, as it was
I dare well saye, in this worlde there nas
The circute a myle was about
walled with stone & dyched all about
Rond was the shape, in maner of a compas
Full of degrees, the hight of sixty paas
That when a man was set on one degre
He letted not his felowe for to see
Estward there stode a gate of marble white
Westward right such a nother i thopposite
And shortly to conclude, suche a place
Was none in earth, as in so lytell space
For in the lond, there nas no crafty man
That geometry, or arsmatyke can
Ne portreyture, ne caruer of Images
That Theseus ne gaue hym mete & wages
The theatre for to make and deuise
And for to do his rite and sacrifice
He estwarde hath vpon the yate aboue
In worshippe of Venus, the godes of loue
Do make an auter, and an oratory
And on the west syde, in memory
Of Mars he maked suche another
That cost of golde largely a fother
And northwarde, in a turret in the wall
Of alabaster whyte and red coral
An oratory ryche for to see
In worthyp of Diane the godes of chastite
Hath Theseus do wrought in noble wyse
But yet had I forgeten to deuise
The noble carynges and the portratures
The shape, the countnaunce & the fygures
That weren in the oratories thre
First in the temple of Venus thou maist se
Wrought on the wal, ful petously to behold
The broken slepes, and the sighes cold
The, sault teares and the weymentyng
The fire strokes, and the desiryng
That loues seruauntes in this life enduren
The othes, that her couenauntes assuren
Pleasaunce & hope, desire foolehardynesse
Beauty and youth, baudry and rychesse
Charmes and sorcery leasinges & flattery
Dispence, busynesse, and ielousye
That wered of yelowe goldes a garlande
And a cokowe sittyng on her hande.
Festes, instrumentes, carolles, & daunces
Iustes and aray, and all the circumstaunces
Of loue, whiche I reken and reken shal
By ordre, were paynted on the wal
And mo than I can make of mencyon
For sothly all the mount of Cytheron
Where Venus hath her principal dwelling
Was shewed on the wall in portreying
With all the ioy, and the lustinesse
Nought was forgetten ỹ portreisse ydlenesse
Ne Narcissus the fayre of yore agon
Ne yet the folye of kynge Salomon
Ne yet the great strength of Hercules
Thenchauntment of Medea and Circes
Ne of Turnus, with his hardy fers corage
The ryche Cresus caytife in seruage
Thus may you sen, that wisdom ne richesse
Beauty ne sleyght, strength ne hardinesse
Ne may with Venus hold champartye
For as her lyst the worlde may she gye
Lo, al these folke so cought were in her lans
Tyl they for wo full often sayd alas
Sufficeth here one example or two
And though I coude reken a thousand mo
The statu of Venus glorious to see
Was maked stepyng in the large see
And fro the nauell down all couered was
With waues grene, & bright as any glas
A cytriole in her right hand had she
And on her heed, full semely for to see
A rose garland fresh, and well smelling
Above her heed doues flickeryng
Before her stode her sonne Cupido
Upon his shoulders wynges had he two
And blynd he was, as it is oft sene
A bowe he had and arrowes bryght & kene
Why shoulde I not as well tellen all
The purgatory ỹ was ther about ouer all
Within ỹ tẽple of myghty Mars the rede
All paynted was ỹ wal in length & in brede
Lyke to the estris of the grisly place
That hight ỹ gret tẽple of Mars in Trace
In thylke colde frosty regyon
Ther Mars hath his souerayne mancyon
First on the wall was paynted a forest
In which ther wonneth neyther man ne best
With knotty and knary trees olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hydous to beholde
In whiche ther was a romble & a swough
As though a storme shold breke euery bough
And downward vnder an hyl vnder a dent
Ther stode the temple of Mars armipotent
Wrought al of burned steele, of which the entre
Was longe and streyght, & gastly for to see
And

And therout cam such a rage & such a vise
That it made all the gates for to ryse
The northern light in at the dores shone
For wyndowe on the wall was there none
Thurgh which men might any light discerne
The dores were al of athamant eterne
Ycleuched overthwarte and endelonge
With yren tough, for to make it stronge
Every piller, the temple to susteyne
Was as gronne great, of yren bright & sheene
There saw I fyrst the derke ymagining
Of felony, and eke the compassing:
The cruell yre, redde as any glede
The pykepurse, and eke the pale drede
The smyler, with the knyfe under the cloke
The shepen brenning with the blacke smoke
The treason of the murdryng in the bedde
The open warre, with woundes al be bledde
Conteke with blody knives, & sharpe manace
All full of chyrking was that sory place
The slear of hym selfe yet saw I there
Hys herte blode hath bathed all hys here
The nayle ydryven in the shode on right
With colde deth, with mouthe gaping upright
Amyddes of the temple sate Mischaunce
With Discomfort, and sory Countenaunce
yet saw I Madnesse laughyng in his rage
Armed complaynt on theft & hys courage
The carrayne in the bushe, with throte ycorue
A thousand slayne, & nat of qualme ystorue
The tyrannt, with the pray by force yraft
The towne destroyed, there was nothing laft
yet saw I brent the shippes hoppesteres
The hunter strangled with the wilde beres
The sowe frettyng the chylde in cradell
The Coke is scalded, for all hys longe ladel
Nought was forgeten yfortune of Marte
The carter ouer rydden by his owne carte
Under the whele, full lowe he lay adown
There were also of Martes divisyon
The barbour, the bocher, and the smyth
That forgeth sharpe swordes on the styth
And al above depaynted in a toure
Saw I Conquest, sittyng in great honoure
With the sharpe swerde over hys heed
Hangyng by a subtyl twynned threed
Depaynted was ther, Julius
Of great Nero and of Antonius
All be that tyme they were unborne
yet was her dethe depaynted there before
By manacyng of Mars, right by fygure
So was it shewed in that portreture
As is depaynted in the sterres above
Who shall be dede or reis slayne for love
Suffyseth one ensample in stores olde
I may not reken them al, though I wolde
The statue of Mars upon a carte stode
Armed, and loked grim as he were wode
And over his heed ther shyneth two figures
Of sterres, that ben cleped in scriptures
That one (Puella) hight, that other (Rubeus)
This god of armes was arayed thus
A wolfe there stode before him at his fete
With eyen redde, and of a man he ete
With subtell penself was paynted this story
In redoutyng of Marte and of hys glory.
Nowe to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortely as I can I wol me haste
To tell you all the discripcion
Depaynted ben the walles up and doun
Of huntyng and eke of chamfast chastite
There saw I howe wofull Calistope
When that Diane greved was with her
Was turned fro a woman to a bere
And afterwarde was she made the lode sterre
Thus was it paynted, I can say no ferre
Her sonne is eke a sterre as men may se
There saw I Dane turned unto a tre
I meane not the godesse Diane
But Venus doughter, which that hight Dane
There saw I Atheon an hert ymaked
For vengeaunce that he saw Diane all naked
I saw how that his houndes have him caught
And freten him, for they knewe him nought
yet ypaynted was a litel ferthermore
Howe Athalant hunted the wylde bore
And Meliager, and many other mo
For whiche Diane wrought him care & wo
There saw I many a nother wonder story
Whiche me lyst not to drawe in memory
Thys goddesse full well upon an hert shete
With smale houndes all about her fete
And undereth her fete, she had a moone
Wexing it was, and sholde wane soone
In gaudy grene, her statue clothed was
With bowe in hand, and arrowes in case
Her eyen cast she full lowe adowne
There Pluto hath his derke region
A woman travelyng was her before
But for her childe, so longe was unborne
Full pytously Lucina gan she call
And sayd helpe, for thou mayst best of all
Wel could he paynte livelyly that it wrought
With many a florein he the hewes bought.

Now ben these lystes made, and Theseus

That

That at his grete coll hath arayed thus
The temples, and the theatre euerydel
Whan it was done, it liked him wonder wel
But fynte I wol of Theseus alyte
And speake of Palamon and of Arcite
The day approcheth of her returnyng
That euerich shuld an hundred knightes brig
The batayle to darreyne, as I you tolde
And to Athenes, her couenantes to holde
Hath euerich of hem brought an. C. knightes
Well armed for the warre, at all ryghtes
And sikerly, there trowed many a man
That neuer sythens the world began
As for to speke of knyghthode, of her honde
As farre as god hath made fre or londe
Nas of so fewe, so noble a company
For euery weyght, that loued chiualry
And wold his thākes haue a passing name
Hath prayed, that he might be of that game
And wel was him, that therto chosen was
For if there fell to morowe suche a caas
Ye knowe well, that euery lusty knyght
That loueth paramours, & hath his myght
Were it in Englande, or els where
They wolde fayne wyllen to be there
To fyght for a lady, ah, benedicite
It were a lusty syght for to se.
And ryght so farden they with Palamon
With him there went knyghtes many on
Some wold ben armed in an haubergeon
And in a brest plate, with a lyght gippon
And some wold haue a payre of plates large
And some wold haue a pruce sheld or a targe
Some wold be armed on his legges wele
And haue an axe, & some a mace of stele
There nas non newe guyse, that it nas olde
Armed were they, as I haue you tolde
Eueriche after his oppinyon.
Ther maist thou se comynge with Palamon
Lygurge him selfe, the great kyng of Trace
Blacke was his berd, & manly was hys face
The sercles of his eyen in his hed
They glouden betwyxt yelowe and red
And lyke a lyon loked he aboute
With kemped heares on his browes stoute
His lymmes great, his brawnes strong
His shoulders brode, his armes round & long
And as the guyse was in his countre
Full hye vpon a charre of golde stode he
With foure white bulles in the trays
In stede of a cote armure, ouer hys harnays
With nayles yelowe, & bright as any golde
He hath a beares skyn, cole blacke for olde
His long heare was kept behynde his backe
As any rauens fether it shone for blacke
A wrethe of gold arme grete, of huge weyght
Upon his hed set full of stones bright
Of fyne rubyes and of dyamandes
About his chare ther went white alaundes
Twenty and mo, as great as any stere
To hunten at the lyon, or at the wylde bere
And folowed him, with mosell fast ybounde
Colers of gold, and torrettes fyled rounde
An hundred lordes had he in his route
Armed full well, with hertes sterne & stoute.

With Arcite, in stories as men fynde
The great Emetrius the kyng of Inde
Upon a stede bay, trapped in stele
Couered with a cloth of gold diapred wele
Came ridyng lyke the god of Armes Marce
His cote armure was of clothe of Trace
Couched with perle, white, rounde & grete
His sadle was of brent gold newe ybet
A mantel vpon his shoulders hongyng
Brette full of rubyes, red as fyre sparklyng
His crysp heare lyke rynges was yronne
And ỹ was yelow, & glyteryng as the sonne
His nose was hye, his eyen bryght citryn
His lyppes ruddy, his colour was sanguyn
A fewe freckles in his face yspronge
Betwyxt yelow, & somdele blacke ymeynte
And as a lyon he his eyen keste
Of fyue and twenty yere his age I geste
His berde was well begonne for to spryng
His voyce was as a trompet sownyng
Upon his hed he wered of lauer grene
A garlande freshe and lusty for to sene
Upon his hande he bare for his delite
An Egle tame, as any lylly white
An hundred lordes had he with him there
All armed saue her heades in her gere
Full richely in all maner thynges
For trustethe well, ỹ eries, dukes, & kynges
were gathered in this noble companye
For loue, and for enerease of chyualrye
About this kyng ther ran on euery parte
Full many a tame lyon and lybarte
And in this wise, these lordes al & some
Ben on the sonday to the cite come
Aboute prime, and in the toune alyght.
This Theseo, this duke this worthi knight
Whan he had brought hem into his cyte
And inned hem, euerychе after his degre
He feesteth hem, and doth so great labour
To easen hem, and don hem all honoure

That yet men wenen that no mans wit
Of none estate coude amende it
The mynstralcye, the seruice at the feest
The grete yeftes, to the moste and leest
The riche array, thyroughout Theseus paleis
Ne who sate first ne last vpon the deys
What ladyes fayrest ben or best daunsyng
Or which of hem can best daunce or syng
Ne who moste feelingly speketh of loue
Ne what haukes sytten on perchen above
Ne what houndes lyggē on the flour adoun
Of all this now make I no mencion
But al the effecte, that thinketh me the beste
Now cometh the point, harkeneth if you leste.

The sonday at night, or day begā to spring
Whan Palamon the larke herde syng
Although it were nat day by houres two
Yet songe the larke, & Palamon right tho
With holy herte, and with an hie corage
He rose vp, to wenden on his pylgrimage
Vnto the blysful Cytherea benygne
I meane Venus, honourable and dygne
And in her hour, he walketh forth a pas
Vnto the lystes, there the temple was
And doune he kneleth, & with humble chere
And herte sore, he sayd as ye shal here.
¶ Fayrest of fayre: O lady myne Venus
Doughter of Ioue, and spouse to Vulcanus
Thou glader of the mounte of Cytheron
For thilke loue thou haddest to Adon
Haue pyte of my bytter teares smerte
And take my humble prayer at thyn herte.
Alas, I ne haue no langage to tell
The effect, ne the torment of myne hell
Myn herte may not myn harmes bewraye
I am so confused, that I can not saye
But mercy lady bryght, that wost wele
My thought, & seest what harmes I fele
Consyder all this, and rue vpon my sore
As wysly as I shall for euermore
Emforth my might, thy true seruaunt be
And holde warre alway with chastyte
That make I myn auowe, so ye me helpe
I kepe not of armes for to yelpe
Ne I ne axe to mowe to haue victory
Ne renome in this caas, ne veyne glory
Of pryse of armes, to blowen vp & doun
But wolde haue fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in her seruise
Fynde thou the maner howe, & in what wyse
I recche not, but it may better be
To haue victory of hem, or they of me
So that I haue my lady in myn armes
For though so be that Mars is god of Armes
Your vertue is so great in heauen above
That yif you lyst, I shall wel haue my loue
Thy temple shall I worshyp euer more
And on thine auter, where I ryde or go
I woll don sacrifice, and fyres bete
And if ye wol not so, my lady swete
Than pray I you, to morowe with a spere
That Arcite me throughout the herte bere
Than recke I not, whan I haue lost my lyfe
Though Arcite wynne her to wyfe
This is the effecte and ende of my prayere
Yeue me my lady, thou blysful lady dere.
Whan the orison was done of Palamon
His sacrifice he did, and that anon
Ful pytously, with all circumstaunces
All tell I nat as now his obseruaunces.
But at the last, the statu of Venus shoke
And made a signe, wherby that he toke
That his prayer accepted was that day
For though the signe shewed a delay
Yet wist he well, that graunted was his bone
And with glad herte he went him hom full sone.

The thirde houre in equall that Palamon
Began to Venus temple for to gon
Vp rose the sonne, and vp rose Emelye
And vnto the temple of Diane gan hye
Her maydens, the whiche thyder were lad
Ful redyly with hem the fyre they had
The ensence, the clothes, & the remenaunt all
That to the sacrifice longen shall
The hornes full of meethe as was the gyse
There lacked nought to don her sacrifyce
Smokyng the temple, full of clothes fayre
This Emely, with herte debonayre
Her body wysshe, with water of a well
But how she dyd right I dare not tell
But it be any thyng in generall
And yet it were a game to here it all
To him that meaneth wel, it were no charge
But it is good a man be at his large
Her bryght heare was vnbrept & vntressed all
A crowne of a grene oke vnderfall
Vpon her herd set ful fayre and mete
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete
And dyd her thynges, as men may beholde
In Stace of Thebes, and these bokes olde
Whā kendled was the fire, with pitous chere
Vnto Diane she spake as ye may here.
¶ O chaste goddesse of the woddes grene
To whom both heuen & erthe and see is sene

Quene

Quene of the regne of Pluto, derke & lowe
Goddesse of maidēs, ỹ myn hert hathe knowe
Ful many a yere, and wost what I desyre
As kepe me fro the vengeaunce of thyn yre
That Attron abought cruelly
Chaste goddesse, well wost thou that I
Desyre to ben a mayde all my lyfe
Ne neuer woll I be loue ne wyfe
I am thou (wost well) of thy company
A mayde, and loue huntyng and venery
And for to walken in the woddes wylde
And not for to ben a wyfe, & ben with childe
Nought wyll I knowe company of man
Now helpe me lady sythe you may and can
For tho thre formes that thou hast in the
And Palamon, ỹ hath such a loue to me
And eke Arcite, that loueth me so sore
This grace I pray the, withouten more
And send loue and peace betwixt hem two
And fro me turne awaye her hertes so
That al her hotte loue, and her desyre
And al her busy turment, and all her fyre
Be queynt, or turned in an other place
And if so be thou wolte not do me that grace
Or if so be my destyny be shapen so
That I shal nedes haue one of hem two
As sende me him that most desyreth me
Beholde goddesse of clene chastite
The bytter teares, that on my chekes fall
Syn thou art a mayde, and keper of vs all
My maydenhede thou kepe, & wel conserue
And while I lyue, a mayden woll I ỹ serue.
¶ The fyres brenne vpon the auter clere
Whyle Emely was thus in her prayere
But sodenly she sawe a thing queynte
For right anon, one of the fyres queynte
And quycked agayn, and after that anon
That other fyre was queynte, and al agon
And as it queynte it made a whystlyng
As done these were brondes in her brennyng
And at the brondes ende, out ran anone
As it were bloddy droppes many one
For whiche so sore agaste was Emelye
That she was wel nye madde, & gan to crye
For she ne wyste what it signyfyed
But onely for the feare thus she cried
And wepte, that it was pyte for to here
And therwithal Dyane gan to apere
With bowe in honde, right as an huntaresse
And said doughter, stynte thyn heuynesse
Amonge the goddes hye it is affirmed
And by eterne worde, written & confyrmed
Thou shalt ben wedded to one of tho
That haue for the so moche care & wo
But vnto whiche of hem I may not tell
Farewell, for I maye no lenger dwell
The fyres, whiche on myn auter brenne
Shall declaren, er that thou go hennе
This auenture of loue, as in this case
And with that word, the arowes in ỹ case
Of the goddesse, clatteren faste and ryng
And forth she went, and made vanesshyng
For whyche this Emelye astonyed was
And sayd: what mounteth this, alas
I put me vnder thy protectyon
Diane, and vnder thy disposicion
And home she goth the next way
This is the effecte there is no more to say.

The next houre of Mars folowynge thys
Arcite vnto the temple walked is
Of fyers Mars, to done his sacrifyse
With all the myght of his paynem wyse
With pitous herte, and hie deuocion
Right thus to Mars he sayd his orison.
¶ O stronge god, that in the reignes colde
Of Trace honoured arte, and lorde yholde
And haste in euery reigne and euery londe
Of armes, al the bridle in thyn honde
And hem fortunest, as the lyste deuyse
Accepte of me my pytous sacrifice
If so be my thought may deserue
And that my myght be worthy for to serue
Thy godhede, that I may ben one of thyne
Than pray I the, that thou rue on my pyne
For thilke payne, and thilke hotte fyre
In whiche thou brentest whylom for desyre
Whan thou wedest the fayre beaute
Of fayre yonge freshe Venus fre
And haddest her in thin armes, at thy wyll
Although thou ones on a tyme misfyll
Whā Vulcanus had caught the in his laas
And founde the lyggyng by his wife alas
For thilke sorow, that was in thine herte
Haue ruthe as well on my paines smerte
I am yong and vnconnyng, as thou woost
And as I trowe, with loue offended most
That euer was any lyues creature
For she that doth me all this wo endure
Ne recheth neuer, whether I synke or flete
And well I wote, or she me mercy hete
I mote with strength wynne her in this place
And wel I wote, without help or grace
Of the, ne may my strength not auayle
Thā helpe me lorde to morow in my batayle
For thilke fyre, that whylom brent the

As well as the fyre now bzenneth me
And do, that I to mozowe haue the victozy
Myn be the trauayle, & thine be the glozy
Thy soueraine temple wol I most honouren
Of any place, and alway most labouren
In thy plesaunce, and in thy crabtes stronge
And in thy temple, I wol my baner honge
And all the armes of my companye
And euermoze, vntyll the day I dye
Eterne fyre I wol beforne the fynde
And eke to this auowe I wol me bynde
My berde, my heare, þ hongeth lowe adoun
That neuer yet felte offencioun
Of rasour ne of shere, I wol the yelde
And ben thy true seruaunt whyle I lyue
Now lozd haue ruthe vpõ my sozowes soze
Yeue me the victozy, I aske the no moze.
¶ The prayer stynte of Arcyte the stronge
The rynges on the temple doze they ronge
And eke the dozes clatren full faste
Of whiche Arcite somwhat him agaste.
The fyres bzennen vpon the auter bzyght
That it gan all the temple lyght
A swete smel anon the grounde vp yaf
And Arcite anon his honde vp haf
And moze ensence in to the fyre he caste
With other rytes mo, and at the laste
The statu of Mars begã his hauberke ring
And with that sounde he herd a murmuring
Ful lowe and dyn, that sayd thus: victozy
Foz which he yafe to Mars honour & glozy
And thus with ioye, & hope well to fare
Arcite anon in to his inne is fare
As fayne as foule is of the bzyght sonne
And right anon suche a stryfe is begonne
Foz thilke graunting, in the heuen aboue
Bytwyxt Uenus, the goddesse of loue
And Mars the sterne god armipotente
That Jupiter was busy it to stente
Tyl that the pale Saturnus the colde
That knewe so many auentures olde
Founde in his experyence and arte
That he ful sone hath pleased euery parte
And soothe is said, elde hath gret auauntage
In elde is both wisedome and vsage
Men may the olde out ren, but not out rede
Saturne anon, to stynten stryfe & drede
Al be it that it be agayne his kynde
Of all this strife he can remedy fynde
My dere doughter Uenus, quod Saturne
My course that hath so wyde foz to turne
Hath moze power than woote any man
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan
Myne is the prison in the derke cote
Myn is þ stragling & the hoging by þ throte
The murmure, and the churles rebellyng
The groynyng, and the priuy empoysonyng
I do vengeaunce and playne correccion
Whyle I dwell in the fygne of the Lyon
Myn is the ruyne of the hye halles
The fallyng of the toures & of the walles
Upon the mynoz, oz vpon the carpenters
I slewe Sampson, shakyng the pylleres
And myn den the maladyes colde
The derke treasons, and the castels olde
My lokyng is the father of pestylence
Now wepe no moze, I shal do my dilygence
That Palamon, that is thin owne knyght
Shall haue his lady, as thou him behyght
Though Mars shal helpe his knight natheles
Betwyxt you it mote somtyme be pees
Al be ye not of one complexion
That causeth al day suche deuysion
I am thyn ayle, redy at thy wyll
Weepe no moze, I wol thy lust fulfyll.
¶ Now wol I stynte of these goddes aboue
Of Mars, & of Uenus goddesse of loue
And playnly I wol tellen you as I can
The great effecte, of whiche that I began.

Great was the feast in Athenes that day
And eke that lusty season in May
Made euery wight to ben in suche plesaunce
That al that day luste they and daunce
And spenten it in Uenus hye seruyse
But bycause that they shulden aryse
Erly, foz to se the great fyght
Unto her rest went they at nyght
And on the mozow whan day gan spryng
Of hozse and harneys, noyse & clatering
There was in the hostelryes al aboute
And to the palays rode there many a route
Of lozdes, vpon stedes and palfreys.
There mayest thou see deuising of harneys
So vncouthe, so riche, & wzought so wele
Of goldsmythry, of bzaudry, and of stele
The shyldes bzight, testers, and trappers
Gold hewe helmes, hauberkes & cote armers
Lozdes in paramentes, on her courseres
Knyghtes of retenue, and eke squyers
Nayling the spores, and helmes bokelyng
Gyggyng of sheldes with layneres lacyng
There as nede is, they were nothyng ydell
The fomyng stedes on the golden bzidell
Gnawyng, and fyle the armurers also
With fyle and hammer, rydyng to and fro

Yemen

Yemen on foote, and commune many one
With shorte staues, thycke as they may gone
Pypes, trompes, nakoners, and clarions
That in the batayle blowen blody sowns
The palays ful of people vp and doun
Here thre, there ten, holdyng her question
Deuisyng of these Theban knightes two
Some said thus, some said it shuld be so
Some held w̄ him with the blacke berde
Some w̄ the balled, some w̄ the thick herde
Some said he loked grym, & wolde fyght
He hath a sparth of twenty poūd of weight.
Thus was the hall full of deuisyng
Longe after the sonne gan to spring
The great Theseus of his slepe gan wake
With minstralcye & noyse that they make
Held yet the chambre of his palays riche
Tyl that the Theban knightes, bothe yliche
Honoured weren, and in to the place ifette.
¶ Duke Theseus is at the wyndow sette
Arayed ryght as he were a god in trone
The people preased thyderwarde full sone
Him for to sene, and done him hye reuerence
And eke for to here his hest & his sentence
An heraude on a scaffolde made an o
Tyl all the noyse of the people was ydo
And whan he saw the people of noyse styll
Thus shewed he ꝑ myghtye dukes wyll.
¶ The lorde hath of his hye discrecion
Considred, that it were distruccion
To gentle bloode, to fyghten in this gyse
Of mortall battayle, now in this empryse
Wherefore to shapen, that they shall not dye
He wol his first purpose modifye
No mā therfore, vp payne of losse of lyfe
No maner shotte, polax, ne shorte knyfe
In to the lystes sende, or thyder bring
Ne short swerde to sticke with point byting
No man ne drawe, ne beare it by his side
Ne no man shall to his felowe ryde
But one course, w̄ a sharpe groūden spere
Foyne if him lyst on fote, him selfe to were
And he that is at mischefe, shal be take
And not slaine, but brought to the stake
That shal ben ordayned on either syde
But thider he shal by force, and there abyde
And if so fal, that the chieftayne be take
On eyther syde, or els sleen his make
No lenger shall the turnament laste
God spede you, gothe and layeth on faste
With swordes & long maces fightē your fil
Goth now your way, this is the lordes wil,
¶ The voice of the people touched heuen
So loude cryed they with merye steuen
God saue suche a lorde, that is so good
He wylleth no distruccion of blood
Up gothe the trompes and the melodye
And to the lystes, rideth so the compaunye
By ordynaunce, throughout the cyte large
Hanged with cloth of gold, & not with sarge
Ful lyke a lord this noble duke gan ryde
These two Thebans on euery syde
And after rode the quene and Emelye
And after that another compaunye
Of one and other, after her degre
And thus they passen throughout the cyte
And to the lystes comen they be by tyme
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme
Whan set was Theseus ful ryche and hye
Ypolita the quene, and Emelye
And other ladyes in degrees aboute
Unto the setes preaseth all the route
And westward, thrugh ꝑ gates vnder marte
Arcite, and eke an hundred of his parte
With baner reed, is entred right anon
And in the selue momet entred Palamon
Is, vnder Uenus, estwarde in that place
With baner white, & hardy chere & face
And in al the world, to seken vp and doun
So euen without variacion
There nas suche companies twey
For there nas none so wyse that coude sey
That any had of other auauntage
Of worthynes, ne of estate, ne age
So euen were they chose to gesse
And into the renges fayre they hem dresse
Whan that her names red were euerychone
That in her nombre, gyle were there none
Tho were the gates shyt, & cryed was loude
Do nowe your deuer yong knightes proude
¶ The herauldes left her prykyng vp & doun
Now ryngen trompes loude & claryoun
There is no more to say, este and west
In goth the sharpe speres sadly in the arrest
In gothe the sharpe spurres into the syde
There se may who can iust, & who can ryde
There shyueren shaftes, vpon sheldes thicke
He feleth through the hert spoune ꝑ pricke
Up spryngeth ꝑ speres, twēty fote on highte
Out goth the swordes, as ꝑ syluer bryghte,
The helmes they to hewe, and to shrede
Out burst ꝑ blood, with sterne stremes rede
With mighty maces, ꝑ bones they to breke
He through ꝑ thickest of ꝑ throg gan threke
Ther stō|den stedes stronge, & doun gon al
He rolled vnder the foote as dothe a ball

he foyneth on his fete with a tronchoun
And he hurleth with his hoyse aboun
He through ỳ body is hurte, and syth ytake
Maugre his herd, & broughte vnto the stake
As forward was, right there he must abyde
An other is ladde on that other syde
And sometyme dothe hem Theseus to reste
Hem to refreshe, and drinke if hem leste.
Full ofte a day haue these Thebans two
To gyther met, and don eche other wo
Unhorsed hath eche other of hem twey
Ther was no tygre, in ỳ vale of Galaphey
Whan her whelpe is stole, whan it is lyte
So cruell on the hunte, as is Arcyte
For ielous herte, vpon this Palamon
Ne in Belmarye, there is no fel lyon
That hunted is, or for his hungre woode
Ne of his pray, desyreth so the bloode
As Palamon to slee his foe Arcite
The ielous strokes on her helmes byte
Out renneth ỳ bloode on both her sydes rede
Sometyme an ende there is of euery dede
For er the sonne vnto the rest wente
The stronge kyng Emetryus gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught with this Arcite
And made his swerde depe in his flesshe byte
And by force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and drawen to the stake
And in the rescous of this Palamon
The stronge kyng Ligurge is borne adoun
And kyng Emetrius, for all his strength
Is borne out of his sadle a swerdes length
So hurt him Palamon or he were take
But al for naught, he was broght to ỳ stake
His hardy herte might him helpe naught
He must abyde, whan that he was caught
By force, and eke by compolycion
Who soroweth now but woful Palamon
That mote no more gon agayne to fyght.
¶ And whan ỳ Theseus had sene ỳ syght
Unto the crowd ne more, for it is don
I wol be trewe iuge, and not partye
Arcite of Thebes shall haue Emelye
That by his fortune hath her fayre ywonne
Anon there is a noyse of people bygonne
For ioye of this, so loude & hye withall
It semed that the listes shulde fall.
What can now faire Venus done aboue
What sayth she now, what doth ỳ queene of loue
But wepeth so, for wanting of her wil
Til that her teares on the listes fell
Sche sayde: I am ashamed doubteles
Saturne sayde: doughter holde thy pees
Mars hath al his wil his knyght hath his bone
And by mine herd, thou shalte be eased sone.
¶ The trompes with the loud mynstralcye
The heraudes, that so loude yel and crye
Ben in her wele, for ioye of dan Arcite
But herkeneth me, & stynteth noyse a lyte
Whiche a myracle there byfell anon.
This fyers Arcite hath his helme of don
And on a courser, for to shewe his face
He pryckyth endlong the large place
Lokyng vpwarde vpon Emelye
And she ayen him caste a frendly eye
(For women, as to speke in commune
They folowen al the fauour of fortune)
And was al his chere, as in his herte
Out of the grounde a fyre infernall sterte
From Pluto sent, at the request of Saturne
For whiche his horse for feare gan to turne
And lepe a syde, and foundred as he lepe
And er that Arcyte may taken kepe
He pyght him on the pomel of his heed
That in the place he lay, as he were deed
His brest to brosten with his sadel bowe
As blacke he lay as any cole or crowe
So was the blood ronne in his face.
Anon he was brought out of the place
With herte sore, to Theseus paleys
Tho was he corsen out of his harneys
And in a bedde ybrought ful fayre and blyue
For he was yet in memorye, and on lyue
And alway crying after Emelye.
¶ Duke Theseus, with all his compayne
Is comen home to Athenes his cyte
With al blysse and great solempnyte
Al be it that this auenture was fall
He wold not discomforte hem all
Men sayd eke, that Arcite shulde not dye
He shulde ben healed of his maladye
And of an other thyng they were as fayne
That of hem all there was none slayne
Al were they sore hurte, and namely one
That with a spere was thronled his brest bone
Two other wounded, & two broke armes
Some had salues, and some had charmes
Fermacies of herbes, and eke saue
They dronken, for they wold her lyues haue
For which this noble duke, as he well can
Comforteth and honoureth euery man
And made reuel al the longe nyght
Unto the straunge lordes, as it was ryght
Ne there nas holde no discomforting
But as iustes or at tourneying

For sothly there nas no discomfiture
For fallyng is holde but an auenture
Ne to be lood by force vnto a stake
Vnyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take
One person a lone, without any mo
And haryed forth, by arme, foote, and too
And eke his stede dryuen forth with staues
With footemen, bothe yemen and knaues
It was aretted him no vilanye
There may no man cleape it cowardye
For whiche anone, duke Theseus did crye
To stynten all rancour and enuye
The grete as well of one syde as of other
And either syde like, as others brother
And yaue hem rightes after her degre
And fully helde a fest dayes thre
And conueyed the knyghtes worthely
Out of hys towne, a dayes iourney largely
And home went euery man the right waye
Ther nas no more but fare wel & haue good (daye

Of this battayle, I will no more endite
But speake of Palamon and Arcyte
Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreaseth at his hert more and more
The clotered blode, for any liche crafte
Corrumped, and is in his body lafte
That neither veyneblode, ne ventousyng
Ne drynke of herbes, may be helpyng
Ne drynke of herbes, may be helpyng
By vertue expulsed, or anymall
For thylke vertue cleaped naturall
Ne may the venym voyde, ne expell
The pypes of his longes began to swell
And euery lacerte, in his brest adown
Is shent with venym and corrupcion
Him gayneth neither, for to get his lyfe
Vomite vpwarde, ne downwarde laxatife
All is to brust thylke regyon
Nature hath no dominacion
And certainly ther as nature wol nat wirch
Farwel phisike, go beare the corse to chirch
This is al & some, that Arcite must dye
For whiche he sendeth after Emelye
And Palamon his cosyn dere
Than sayd he thus, as ye shall after here
Thought may my woful spirite in my hert
Declare a poynt of all my sorowes smert
To you my lady, that I loue moste
But I bequeth the seruyce of my goste
To you abouen any creature
Sin that my lyfe may no lenger dure
Alas the wo, alas my paynes stronge
That I for you haue suffered, & so longe
Alas the dethe, alas myn Emelye
Alas departyng of our company
Alas myn hertes quene, alas my liues wife
Myn hertes lady, ender of my lyfe
What is the world, what asken men to haue
Now with his loue, now in his cold graue
Alone without any companye
Farwel my swete foe, myn Emelye
And soft take me in your armes twey
For the loue of god, herkeneth what I sey.
I haue here with my cosin Palamon
Had strife and rancour, many a day agon
For loue of you, and for my ielousye
And Jupiter so wysely my soule gye
To speaken of a seruaunt properly
With circumstaunces all trewely
That is to saye, trouth, honor, & knighthede
Wisdom, humblesse, estate, & hye kinrede
Fredom, and all that longeth to that arte
So Jupiter haue of my soule parte
As in this world, right nowe knowe I non
So worthy to be loued as Palamon
That serueth you, and wol don al his life
And yf that you shall euer ben a wyfe
Forget not Palamon, the gentle man
And with that word his speche fayle began
For from his feete vnto his brest was come
The colde dethe, that had hym nome
And yet more ouer, for in hys armes two
The vitall strength is lost, and all a go
Saue onely the intellect, without more
That dwelled in his hert sicke and sore
Gan fayten, when the hert felte dethe
Dusked hys eyen two, and fayled brethe
But on hys lady, yet cast he his eye
His last worde was, mercy Emelye
His spirite chaunged, and out went there
Whether warde I can not tell, ne where
Therfore I stynt, I am no diuinistre
Of soules fynde I not in thys regystre
Ne me leste not thylke opinion to tell
Of hem, though they writen wher they dwell
Arcite is colde, that Mars his soule gye
Nowe wol I speake forth of Emelye.
¶ Shright Emely, and howlen Palamon
And Theseus hys sister vp toke anon
Swoonyng, & bare her fro his corse away
Whatt helpeth it to tary forth the day
To tellen how she wept both euen & morow
For in suche case women haue muche sorow
Whan that her husbandes ben fro hem go
That for the more parte they sorowen so
Or elis fallen in suche maladye
That at the last, certaynly they dye

Infinite ben the sorowe and the teres
Of olde folke, and folke of tender yeres
In al the towne for deth of this Theban
For hym ther wepeth bothe childe and man
So great weping was there not certayn
When Hector was brought, al fresche islayn
To Troy alas, the pety that was there
Cratchyng of chekes, rentyng eke here
Why wouldest thou be deed, thus womé cry
And haddest goode ynough, and Emely?
No man may glad Theseus
Saving his olde father Egeus
That knewe thys worldes transmutacion
As he had sene it, bothe vp and doun
Joy after wo, and wo after gladnesse
And shewed hym ensamples and lykenesse
Right as there dyed neuer man, quod he
That he ne lyued in earth in some degre
Right so there lyued neuer man, he sayde
In thys worlde, that som tyme he ne deyde
Thys world is but a thorowfare ful of wo
And we ben pilgrimes, passing to and fro
Deth is an ende of every worldes sore
And ouer all thys yet sayd he moch more
To thys effect, full wysely to exorte
The people, ỳ they shoulde hem recomforte
Duke Theseus with all his busy cure
Casteth nowe, where that the sepulture
Of good Arcite, shall best ymaked be
And eke moste honorable of degre
And at the last he toke conclusion
That there as Arcite and Palamon
Had for loue the battayle hem betwene
That in the same selue groue, swete & grene
There as he had hys amerous desires
Hys complaynt, & for loue hys hote fires
He wolde make a fyre, in whiche the offis
Funerall he might hem all accomplis
He hath anon commaunded to hacke & hew
The okes olde, and lay hem all on a rew
In culpons, well arayd for to brenne
His officers with swifte fote they renne
And right anon at his commaundement.
And after Theseus hath he sent
After a beare, and it all ouer spradde
With cloth of golde, the richest that he had
And of the same sute he clothed Arcite
Upon hys handes his gloues whyte
Eke on his heed a crowne of laurell grene
And in hys hand a swerde ful bryght & kene
He layed hym bare the visage on the bere
Therwith he wept that pite was to here
And for the people shuld seue hym all
When it was day he brought hym to ỳ hall
That roreth of ỳ cry & of the sorowes soun
Tho gan thys wofull Theban Palamon
With glitering herd, & ruddy shining heres
In clothes blacke, dropped all with teres
And passyng other of weping Emely
The rufullest of all the company.
And in as muche as the seruice shulde be
The more noble, and ryche in his degre
Duke Theseus let forth the stedes bring
That trapped were in stele al glyteryng
And couered with the armes of dan Arcite
Upon these stedes great and whyte
Ther sate folke, of which one bare his sheld
Another his speare, in hys hande held
The thirde bare with hym a bowe turkes
Of brent golde was the case & eke the harnes
And rydden forth a pace with sory chere
Towarde the groue, as ye shall after here.
The noblest of the grekes, that there were
Upon her shulders caryed the bere
With lake pace, and eyen red and white
Thoughout the cite, by the mayster strete
That spradd was al wt blak, & that wōder hie
Right of the same is the strete ywrye
Upon the right hande went Egeus
And on the other syde duke Theseus
With vessels in her hande of golde full fyne
All full of hony, mylke, blode, and wyne
Eke Palamon, with full great company
And after that, cam wofull Emely
With fyre in hande, as was ỳ tyme the gyse
To don the office of funerall seruyse
Hye labour, and full greate apparaylyng
Was at seruyce, and at fyre makyng
That with his grene toppe the heuen raught
And twenty fadome of bred armes straught
This is to sayn, the bowes were so brode
Of strawe first there was layd many a lode.
But how the fyre was maked vp on height
And eke the names, howe the trees heyght
As oke, firre, birch, aspe, elder, elme, popeler
Wyllo, holm, plane, bore, chesteyn, laure
Maple, thorne, beche, ewe, hasel, whipultre
Howe they were feide, shal not be told for me
Ne howe the goddes ronne vp and doun
Disherited of her habitacion
In whiche they wonned in rest and pees
Nimphes, faury, and Amadriades
Ne howe the beestes, ne the birdes all
Fledden for feare, when the trees fall
Ne howe the ground agast was of the light
That was nat wonte to se the sonne bright

Ne

Ne howe ꝑ fyre was couched fyrst with stre
And than with drye stykes cloven a thre
And than w grene wodde, and spicery
And than with clothe of golde and perry
And garlondes hangyng w many a floure
The myrre, the ensence, wyth swete odoure
Ne how Arcite lay among al this
Ne what richesse aboute his body is
Ne howe that Emely, as was the gyse
Put in the fyre of funeral seruise
Ne how she swouned, whā maked was ꝑ fyre
Ne what she spake, ne what was her desyre
Ne what iewelles men in the fyre caste
Whan that ꝑ fyre was great & brent fast
Ne how sōe cast her sheide, & some her spere
And of her vestimentes, which ꝑ they were
And cuppes ful of wyne, mylke, & blode
Into the fyre, that brent as it were wode
Ne how the grekes with a huge route
Thryse rydden all the fyre aboute
Upon the left hande, w a loude showting
And thryse with her speres clateryng
And thryse how the ladyes gan crye
Ne how that ladde was homward Emelye
Ne how that Arcite is brent to ashen colde
Ne how the lyche wake was holde
All that nyght, ne how the grekes play
The wake playes, kepe I nat to say
Who wrestled best naked, w oyle anoynt
Ne who bare him best in euery poynt
I woll not tellen howe they gone
Whom to Athenes, whan the play is done
But shortly to the poynte than wol I wende
And make of my longe tale an ende.

By processe and by length of yeres
All stynten is the mornyng and the teres
Of grekes, by one generall assent
Than semed me there was a parlement
At Athenes, vpon a certayne point and caas
Among the which poyntes ypoken was
To haue with certayne countres alyaunce
And haue of Thebans fully obeysaunce
For which this noble Theseus anon
Let sende after this gentyl Palamon
Unwyste of him what was the cause & why:
But in his blacke clothes sorowfully
He came at his commaundement on hye
Tho sent Theseus after Emelye.
Whan they were set, & hushte was ꝑ place
And Theseus abydden hath a space
Or any worde came from his wyse brest
His eyen sette he there hym lest
And with suche a sadde visage, he syked styl
And after that, ryght thus he sayd his wil
¶ The fyrst moner of the cause aboue
Whan he first made the fayre chaine of loue
Great was the effecte, & hie was his entente
Well wist he why, & what therof he mente
For with that fayre chayne of loue he bonde
The fyre, the eyre, the water, and the londe
In certayne bondes, that they maye nat flee
That same prince and that mouer, quod he
Hath stablysshed i this wretched worlde adon
Certen dayes and duracion
To all that are engendred in this place
Ouer the whiche day they may nat pace
All mowe they yet the dayes abredge
There nedeth non auctorite to ledge
For it is proued by experyence
But that me lyst declare my sentence
Then may men by this order discerne
That thylke mouer stable is and eterne
Wel may men knowe, but he be a foole
That euery party is deryued from his hoole
For nature hath nat taken his begynning
Of one parte or cantel of a thing
But of a thynge that perfyt is and stable
Descendyng so, tyll it be corrumpable
And therfore of his wyse purueyaunce
He hath so well beset his ordynaunce
That spaces of thynges and progressions
Shullen endure by successions
And not eterne, without any lye
This may'st thou vnderstande & se at eye
Lo the oke, that hath so longe a norysshyng
Fro the tyme ꝑ it begynneth first to spryng
And hath so longe a lyfe, as ye may see
Yet at the last, wasted is the tree
Considereth eke, howe that the harde stone
Under our fete, on which we treade & gone
Yet wasteth it, as it lyeth in the wey
The brode ryuer somtyme wexeth drey
The great townes, se we wane and wende
Than ye se that all this thing hath ende
And man and woman se shall we also
That nedeth in one of the termes two
That is to sayn, in youth or elis in age
He mote be dede, & lyng as well as a page
Some in his bedde, some in the depe see
Some in the large felde, as ye may se
It helpeth not, all goeth that yike wey
Than may you se that all thyng mote dey
What maketh this, but Jupiter the kyng
That is prince, and cause of all thyng
Conuertynge all to his proper wyll

From

Thus lyuyth he, & derked forth to rest
And herd nought, no creature on lyue
Of no degre, nay lyeth for to stryue
Than is it wysdome, as thinketh me
To make vertue of necessite
And take it well, that we may not eschewe
And namely that to vs all is dewe
And who so grutcheth aught, he doth folye
And rebell is to hym that all may gye
And certaynly, a man hath moste honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour
When he is kyker of his good name
Than hath he don his frendes no shame
And gladder ought his frendes be of his deth
When with honour yolde is vp the breth
Than whan hys name apaled is for age
For all forgetten in his vassellage
Than it is best, as for a worthy fame
To dyen, when he is best of name
The contrary of all thys is wilfulnesse
Why grutchen we, why haue we heuynesse
That good Arcite of cheualry the flour
Departed is, with duety and with honoure
Out of thys foule prison, of thys lyfe
Why grutchen here his cosyn and his wife
Of his welfare, that loueth hym so wele
Can he hem thank, may god wote neuer a dele
That bothe his soule, & eke hem offende
And yet they mowe not her lustes amende
What may conclude of thys long storye
But after sorowe, I rede vs be merye
And thanke Jupiter of al hys grace
And er we departen from thys place
I rede we maken of sorowes two
One parfite ioye, lasting euermo
And loke nowe where moste sorow is herin
There will I fyrste amende and begyn
Suster quod he thys is my full assent
With all the people of my parlement
That gentle Palamon, your owne knyght
That seruyth you, with wyl, herte, & might
And euer hath don, sith ye fyrst hym knewe
That ye shall of your grace vpon hym rewe
And take hym for husbonde and for lorde
Lene me your hande, for this is our accorde
Let se nowe of your womanly pyte
He is a kynges brother sonne parde
And though he were a poore bachelere
Syn he hathe serued you so many a yere
And had for you so great aduersyte
It moste ben considered, leueth me
For gentle mercy ought to passen ryghte.
Thus sayd he thus to Palamon the knyght
I trowe there nede lytell sermonyng
To make you assenten to this thing
Cometh nere, & taketh your lady by the honde
Bytwyxt hem was maked anon the bonde
That hyghte matrimony or maryage
By al the counsayle of the baronage
And thus with al blysse and melodye
Hath Palamon ywedded Emelye.
And god that al this worlde hath wrought
Send him his loue, that it hath so dere bought
For now is Palamon in all wele
Lyuyng in blysse, in richesse, and in hele
And Emely him loueth so tenderly
And he her serueth so gentelly
That neuer was there no word hem bitwene
Of iealousye, or of any other teme
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye
And god saue al this fayre companye.

Here endeth the knyghtes tale, and here folowyth the Mylleres prologue.

WHan that the knight had thus his tale ytolde
In al the copany was there yong ne olde
That he ne sayd, it was a noble storye
And worthy to be drawen in memorye
And namely the gentyls euerychone
Our host laughe and sware, so mote I gone
This gothe a right, vnbokled is the male
Let se nowe who shall telle an other tale
For trewely, the game is well begonne
Now telleth sir monke if ye conne
Somwhat, to quyte with the knyghtes tale
The Myller for dronken was al pale
So that vnnethes vpon his horse he satte
Ne nolde auale neyther hood ne hatte
Ne abyde no man for his curtesye
But in Pylates voyce he began to crye
And swore by armes, bloode, and bones
I can a noble tale for the nones (tale
With which I wol nowe quite the knighte hys
Our host sawe that he was dronken of ale
And sayd: abyde Robyn leue brother
Some better man shall telle vs first an other
Abyde, and let vs worche thryftely.
By gods soule (quod he) that wol not I
For I wol speke, or elis go my way
Our host answerde: tel on a deuelway
Thou arte a foole, thy wit is ouercome
Now herkeneth quod the myller, al & some
But first I make protestacion
That I am dronke, I know it by my soun

And

And therfore yf I mispeke or say
wite it the ale of Southwarke, I pray
For I will tell a legende and a lyfe
Both of a carpenter and hys wyfe
How that a clerke set a wrythes cappe
¶ The Reue answerde & sayd stynt thy clap
Let be thy lewd dronken harlotry
It is a synne, and eke a greate foly
To apayren any man, or hym defame
And eke to bryng wyues in suche blame
Thou mayst ynough of other thynges sayn.
Thys dronken myller spake full sone agayn
And sayd: leue brother Osswolde
Who hath no wyfe is no cokolde
But I say not therfore that thou art one
There ben full good wyues many one
Why art thou angry with my tale now
I haue a wyfe parde, as well as thou
Yet nolde I for all the oxen in my plough
Take vpon me more than ynough
To demen of my selfe that I am one
I will beleue that I am none
An husbande shoulde not ben inquisitife
Of goddes preuite, ne of his wife
For so he fynde goddes foyson there
Of the remnaunt, needeth not to enquere
What shuld I more say, but this millere
He nolde his wozde for no man forbere
But told his choryes tale in thys manere
Me forthinketh I shall rehearse it here
And therfore, euery gentle wight I pray
Demeth not for goddes loue, that I say
Of yuel entent, but that I more rehearse
Her tales all, ben they better or werse
Or elis falsen some of my matere
And therfore, who so lyst it not to here
Turne ouer the lefe, and chose another tale
For ye shall fynde ynowe great and smale
Of historial thing, that toucheth gentilnesse
And eke moralite, and holynesse
Blame not me, yf that ye chose amys
The Myller is a chorle, ye knowe well thys
So was the Reue eke, and other mo
And harlotry they tolde eke both two
Auyse you, and put me out of blame
And eke men shuld not make ernest of game.

Here endeth the Myllers prologue: and here after followeth his tale.

WHylom ther was dwelling in Oxenforde
A riche gnofe, ỳ gestes heldе to borde
And of his craft he was a carpenter
With hym there was dwellyng a pore scolere
Had ylerned art, but all hys fantasye
Was turned to lerne astrologye
And coude certayne of conclusions
To demen by interrogations
If that men asken hym in certayne houres
Whan ỳ men shuld haue drought or shoures
Or yf men asked hym what should befall
Of euery thyng, I may not reken all
Thys clerke was cleped hende Nycholas
Of derne loue he coude and of solas
And therto he was slye and right prime
And pryke to a mayden meke to se
A chambre he had in that hostelry
Alone, withouten any company
Ful fetously dight with herbes sote
And he hym selfe as swete as is the rote
Of lycores, or of any spycerale
His almagiste, and bokes great and smale
His astrelagour, longyng for hys arte
Hys augrym stones lyeng fayre aparte
On shelues couched at hys beddes heed
Hys presse ycouered with a falsyng reed
And all aboue there lay a gay sautrye
On whiche he made on nyghtes melodye
So swetely, that all the chambre rong
And Angelus ad virginem he song
And after that he songe the kynges note
Full ofte blyssed was hys mery throte
And thus the swete clerke hys tyme spente
After his frendes fyndyng and his rente.
¶ This carpenter had wedded newe a wife
Whiche that he loued more than his lyfe
Of eyghtene yere she was of age
Jelous he was, and kept her strayte in cage
For she was wyld, and yonge: & he was olde
And demed hym selfe to ben a cokewolde
He knewe not Cato: for his wife was rude
That bade men wed her semblable
Men shoulde wedde after her estate
For youth and elde is often at debate
But syth he was fallen in the snare
He must endure, as other folke his care
Fayre was thys yong wyfe, & therwithall
As any wyesele her body gente and small
A seynt she werked, barred all with lylie

A barme cloute, as white as mawwe mylke
Upon her lendes, full of many a gore
Of whytnes wer smock, & embrouded al bifore
And eke behynde on her coliere aboute
Of cole blacke sylke, within and eke without
The tapes of her white volypere
Were of the same sute of her coliere
Her fyllet brode of sylke, and set full hye
And sikerly, she had a lykerous eye
Ful smale ypulled were her browes two
And they were bent, and blacke as any sloo
She was mochemore blyssful for to se
Than is the newe perjenet tre
And softer than the wolle is of a wether
And by her gyrdel honge a purse of lether
Tassed with sylke, and perled with latoun
In al this worlde, to seken up and doun
There nys no man so wyse, y^t couthe thenche
So gay a popelote, or so gay a wenche
Ful brighter was the shining of her hewe
Than in the towre the noble forged newe
But of her songe, it was so loude & yerne
As any swalowe sytting on a berne
Therto she couthe skyppe, & make a game
As any kydde or calfe folowing his dame
Her mouth was swete, as braket or ye methe
Or hoorde of appies, lyeng in hey or hethe
Wynsyng she was, as is a joly colte
Long as a maste, and upright as a bolte
A broche she bare on her lowe coliere
As brode as the bosse of a bucklere
Her shoes were laced on her legges hye
She was a primrose, and a pyggesnye
For any lorde to lyggen in his bedde
Or yet for any good yoman to wedde.
Now sir and eke sire, so bifel the cas
That on a day this hende Nycholas
Fel with this yonge wyfe to rage and pley
Whyle that her husbonde was at Oseney
As clerkes ben ful subtil and queynte
And prively he caught her by the queynte
And sayd: I wys but I have my wyll
For derne love of the leman I spyll
And helde her faste by the hanche bones
And sayd: lemman love me wel at ones
Or I wol dyen also god me save.
And the sycorge as a colte in a trave
And with her heed she wryth fast away
And sayd: I wol not kysse the by my fay
Why let be quod she, let be Nicholas
Or I wol crye out harrowe and alas
Do way your hondes for your curtesye.
This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye
And spake so faire, & profered hym so faste
That she her love graunted hym at laste
And swore her ooth, by seint Thomas of Kent
That she would ben at his comaundement
When that she may her leyser wel aspye
Hy husbonde is so full of jelousye
That but ye wayte wel, and be prive
I wote right wel I nam but deed, quod she
Ye moste be ful derne as in thys cas.
Nay therof care ye nat, quod Nycholas
A clerke had lytherly beset hys whyle
But yf he couth a carpenter begyle
And thus they were accorded, and yswore
To a waren a tyme as I have sayd before
And whe Nycholas had don thus every dele
And thanked her about the lendes wele
He kyssed her swete, and taketh his sautrye
And playeth fast, and maketh melodye
Than fel it thus, that to the parysshe cherche
(Cristes owne workes for to werche)
Thys good wife wente upon an holy day
Her forhed shone as bryght as any day
So was it washe, when she lete her werke.
Now was there of ye chirch a parish clerke
The whiche that was cleped Absolon
Crulle was his heare, & as golde it shon
And strouted as a fanne large and brode
Full strayght and euen lay hys joly shode
His rode was redde, his eyen gray as goos
With Poles windowes corue on his shoos
In hosen redde he went fetously
Sitte he was full smale and properly
All in a kyrtle of lyght waget
Ful fayre and thicke bet the poyntes set
And therupon he had a gay surplyse
As whyte as is the blossome on the rys
A mery chylde he was, so god me save
Wel coude he let blood, clyppe, and shave
And make a charter of londe, & a quitaunce
In twenty maner coud he trippe & daunce
After the skole of Oxenforde tho
And with his legges caste to and fro
And play songes on a smale rybyble
Therto he songe sometyme a loude quinible
And as well coude he play on a geterne
In all the towne nas brewhouse ne taverne
That he ne visited with his solas
There any gay tapstere was
But sothe to say he was somwhat squaimus
Of fartyng, and of speche daungerous
This Absolon, that was joly and gay
Goth with a censer on the sonday
Censing the wyues of the parisshe faste

And

And many a louely loke on hem he caste
And namely on this carpenters wife
To loue on her him thought a merry lyfe
She was so propre, and swete as lycorous
I dare wel saye if she had ben a mous
And he a cate, he wolde haue her bette anon.
This parysshe clerke, this ioly Absolon
Hath in his herte suche a loue longyng
That of no wife toke he none offeryng
For curteysye he sayd he wold none
The moone, whan it was night bright shone
And Absolon his gyterne hath ytake
For paramoures he thought for to wake
And forth he goth, iolous and amerous
Tyl he came to the carpenters hous
A lyttel after the cocke had ycrowe
And dressed him by a shot wyndowe
That was vpon the carpenters wall
He syngeth in his voyce gentle & small
Now dere lady, if thy wyll be.
I pray you that ye wolde rewe on me
Ful wel accordyng to his gyternyng.
¶ This carpenter awoke, & herde him syng
And spake vnto his wyfe anon
What Alyson, herest thou not Absolon
That chaūteth thus vnder our bowres wal?
And she answerde her husbonde there wythal
Yes god wot, I here him euery dele
This passeth forth, what wol ye bet thā wele
Fro day to day, this ioly Absolon
So woeth her, that him was wo bygon
He waketh all the nyght, and al the day
He kembeth his lockes brode, & made him gay
He woeth her by meanes and bycage
And swore, he wolde ben her owne page
He syngeth brokkyng as a nyghtyngale
He sent her pyment, methe, and spyced ale
And wafres pypyng hotte out of the glede
& for she was of towne, he profered her mede
For some folke wol be wonne for rychesse
And some for strokes, & some vb gentilnesse.
Somtyme to shew his lyghtnesse & mastrye
He playeth Herodes on a skaffolde hye
But what auayleth him, as in this caas?
So louerth she this hende Nycholas
That Absolon may blowe ỳ bucket horne
He ne had for his labour but a scorne
And thus she maketh Absolon her ape
And al his requeste turneth to a iape
For soth this prouerbe it is no lye
Men say thus alway, the nye slye
Maketh the ferre loue to be lothe
For though ỳ Absolon be wode or wrothe
Bycause that he ferre was from her syght
Thus nye Nycholas stode in his lyght.
But now hearke wel hende Nycholas
For Absolon may wayle and synge alas
And so byfel it on a saterday
This carpenter was gone to Oseney
And hende Nicholas and Alison
Accorded were to this conclusion
That Nicholas shuld shapen hem a wyle
This sely ielous carpenter to begyle
And if so be the game went a right
She shuld slepe in his armes al nyght
For this was his desyre and hers also
And right anon, without wordes mo
This Nycholas no lenger wolde tarye
But doth ful softe vnto his chambre carye
Both mete & drinke, for a day or twey
And to her husbonde bade her for to say
If that he asked after Nicholas
She shuld say she wyste where he was
Of al that day she sawe him not with eye
She trowed he was in some maladye
For no cry that her mayde coude call
He nolde answere, for naught ỳ might befall.
¶ Thus passeth forth al the ylke saterday
That Nicholas syt in his chambre ay
And ete, dranke, & slept, & did what hym lyste
Tyl sonday, ỳ the sonne goeth to reste.
¶ This sely carpenter hath greate marueyle
Of Nycholas, or what thing might him eyle
And said: I am a drad by sayntē Thomas
It stondeth not aryght with Nycholas
God shylde that he dyed sodaynly
This worlde is now ful vykel sekerly
I saw to day a cors borne to cherche
That now on mōday last I saw him werche
Go vp (quod he vnto his knaue) anone
Clepe at his dore, & knocke fast with a stone
Loke howe it is, and tel me boldely.
¶ This knaue went vp full sturdely
And at the chambre dore, whyle ỳ he stode
He cried and knocked as he were woode
What how? what do ye mayster Nicholay?
How may ye slepe al this longe day?
But all for nought, he herde not a worde.
An hole he found ful low vpon a borde
There as the cate was wont in to crepe
And at that hole he lokked in ful depe
And at the last he had of him a syght.
¶ This Nycholas sate ever gaping vpright
As he had beyked on the newe mone
Adowne he gothe, & tolde his mayster sone
In what aray he sawe this ylke man.

¶ This carpenter to blyssen him began
And said: now helpe vs seynt Frideswyde
A man wot tyde what shal him betyde
This man is fallen, with his Astromonye
In some woodnesse, or in some agonye
I thought aye well howe it shulde be
Men shulden not know of Gods pryuete
Ye blessed be alway the lewde man
That naught but onely his byleue can.
Right so ferde an other clerke by astronomy
He walked into the feldes for to pry
Upon the sterre, to wete what shuld befall
Til he was in a marlpyt yfall
He saw not that, yet by fortune Thomas
Me tewerth sore on hymde Nycholas
He shal be astard out of his studyeng
If that I may, by Jesus heuen kyng.
Get me a staffe, that I may vndersprote
While that thou Robyn heuest vp the doze
He shal out of his studyeng, as I gesse
And to the chamber doze he gan him dresse
His knaue was a strong carle for the nones
And by the halse bare vp the doze at ones
In to the floze the doze fell anone.
¶ This Nicholas sate as still as any stone
And euer gaped vpward in to the eyre.
This carpenter wend he were in dispeyre
And hente him by the shulders mightily
And shoke him hard, and cryed spytously
What Nycholas, what howe loke about thee
I wake, and thinke on Christes passion
I crouche & blesse, fro wicked wightes
Ouerwith the nightspel he said anon rightes
On four halues, of the house aboute
And on the threshfolde of the doze without
Jesu Christ, and saynte Benedicte
Blesse this house from euery wycked wight
Fro the nyghtes mare the wyte pater noster
Where wonnest thou saynt Peters sustren
¶ And at the laste this hende Nycholas
Gan for to syke sore, and said alas
Shal al this worlde be lost eftsones nowe
This carpenter answerd: what sayst thou
What thinke on god, as we do men & swynke
This Nicholas answerd: fecche me drinke
And after wol I speke in pryuete
Of certayne thynges, that toucheth the & me
I wol telle it none other man certayne.
This carpenter goth downe, & comt & agayne
And brought of mygthy ale a large quarte
And when they ech of hem had dronke his parte
This Nycholas, his doze fast shette
And downe the carpenter by him sette
And sayde: Johan hoste myn lefe and dere
Thou shalte vpon thy trouthe sweren me here
That to no wight & shalt my counsell wrey
For it is Christes counsayle that I say
And if thou tell it any man, thou art forlore
For thys vengeaunce thou shalt haue therfore
That if thou wrayest me, thou shalt be woode.
¶ Nay Christ it forbyd for his holy bloode
Quod tho this fryy man, I am no blabbe
Ne though I say it, I am not lefe to gabbe
Say what thou wolte, I shal it neuer tell
To child ne wyfe, by him that harowed hell.
Now John (quod Nicholas) I wol not lye
I haue yfounden in myne astrologye
As I haue loked in the moone bryght
That now on monday nexte, at quarter nyght
Shal fall a rayne, & that so wyld and woode
That halfe so great was neuer Noes floode
This worlde (he said) in lesse than an houre
Shal al be drenyte, so hydous is the shoure
Thus shal mankynde drenche, & lese her lyfe.
This carpenter answerd & said: alas mi wife
And shal she drenche? Alas myn Alysoun
For sorow of this he fel almoste adoun
And said: is there no remedye in this caas?
Yes yes ful good (quod hende Nycholas)
If thou wolt werche after lore and rede
Thou maist not werche after thyn owen hede
For thus saith Salomon, & was ful trewe
Worke al by counsayle, & thou shalte not rewe.
And if thou wilt werken by good counsayle
I vndertake, without mayle or fayle
Yet shal I saue her, and the and me.
Hast thou not herde how saued was Noe?
When & our lord had warned him byforne
That al the worlde with water shuld be lorne
Yes (quod the carpenter) ful yore a go.
¶ Hast thou not herde (quod Nicholas) also
The sorow of Noe with his fleschpype
Or that he myght gete his wife to shyppe
Him had leuer, I dare wel vndertake
At thilke tyme, than al his werthers blake
That she had a shyp her selfe alone
And therfore wost thou what is best to done?
This asketh haste, and of an hasty thyng
Men may not preche ne make tarryeng
Anon go get vs fast in to this inne
And eke go get a kneding trowe or eles a kemelyn
For ech of vs, but loke that they ben large
In which men mowe swymme as in a barge
And haue therin vitayles suffysyante
But for a day, fye on the remenante
The water shal aslake and gon away

About

Aboute prime vpon the next day
But Robyn may not weten of this thy knaue
Ne eke thy maide Gille, I may not saue
Aske not why: for though thou aske me
I wol not tel goddes priuete
Suffiseth the, but if thy wittes be madde
To haue as great a grace as Noe hadde
Thy wyfe shall I wel saue out of doute
Go now thy way, and spede the here aboute
But whan thou hast for her, & the, and me
Ygeten vs these knedyng tubbes thre
Than shalt thou hange hem in the rofe full hye
That no man of our purueyaunce espye
And whan thou hast don thus as I haue sayde
And hast our vitayle fayre in hem playde
And eke an axe to smyte the corde a two
Whan that the water cometh, that we maye go
And breake an hole on hye vpon the gable
Vnto the garden warde, ouer the stable
That we may freely passen forth our way
Whan that the great shoure is gon away
Than shal I swym as merry I vndertake
As dothe the white ducke after her drake
Than wol I clepe, how Alyson, howe John
Be merry: for the floode wol passe anon
And thou wolt sain, hayle maister Nicholay
Good morow: for I se wel that it is day
And than we shal be lordes al our lyfe
Of all the worlde, as was Noe and his wife
But of one thynge I warne the ful right
Be wel auysed on that yike nyght
That we bene entred into the shyppes borde
That none of vs ne speke not a worde
Ne clepe ne crye, but ben in his prayere
For it is goddes owne heste dere.
Thy wife & thou mote hange fer a twynne
For that byrwyst you shall be no lynne
No more in lokyng than there shal in dede
This ordynaunce is sayd, go god the spede
To morow at nyght, whan men ben al a slepe
In to our knedyng tubbes wol we crepe
And sytten there, abydyng goddes grace
Go now thy way, I haue no lenger space
To make of this no lenger sermonyng
Men say thus: send the wyse, & say nothing
Thou art so wyse, it nedeth the not to teche
Go saue our lynes, and that I the beseche.
This sely carpenter goth forth hys way
Ful ofte he sayd alas, and welaway
And to his wyfe he tolde his priuete
And she was ware, and knewe it bet than he
What al this queynte cast was for to sey
But natheles, she ferde as she wolde dey
And sayd: alas, go forth thy way anone
Helpe vs to shape, or we be dede echone
I am thy trewe verey wedded wife
Go dere spouse, and helpe to saue our lyfe.
Lo, whiche a great thing is affection
Men may dye of ymagination
So depe may impression be take.
This sely carpenter begynneth to quake
Him thynketh verily that he may se
Noes flodde come walwyng as the se
To drenchen Alyson, his hony dere
He wepeth, wayleth, and maketh sory chere
He syketh, with many a sory thought
He goth, & getteth him a knedyng trough
And after a tubbe, and a kemelyn
And priuely he sent hem to his in
And hynge hem in the rofe ful priuely
His owne hand, he made him ladders thre
To clymben by the ronges, & by the stalkes
Into the tubbes hongyng by the balkes
And hem vitayled, both trough and tubbe
With breed and chese, & good ale in a iubbe
Suffisyng ryght ynowe, as for a day
But er that he had made all this array
He sent his knaue, & eke his wenche also
Vpon his nede to London for to go
And on the monday, whan it drowe to nyght
He shette his doore, without candel lyght
And dresse al thing, as it shulde be
And shortly clomben vp all thre
They seten styll not fully a forlonge way
Now pater noster clom, sayd Nycolay
And clum quod Johã, & clum said Alyson
This carpenter said his deuocion
And stylle he sytte, and byddeth his prayere
Awayting on the rayne, if he it here.
The deed slepe, for werry besynesse
Fel on this carpenter, right as I gesse
Aboute curfewe tyme, or lytell more
For trauayle of his goste he groneth sore
And eft he routeth, for his heed myslay
And downe of the ladder thã stalketh Nycolay
And Alyson ful softe after he spedde
Without wordes mo they went to bedde
There as the carpenter was woned to lye
There was the reuel, and the melodye
And thus lieth Alyson and Nycholas
In besynesse of myrthe and solas
Tyl that the bel of laudes gan to synge
And freres in the chaunsell gon to synge.
This parisshe clerke, this amerous Absolon
That is for loue alway so wo bygon
Vpon the monday was at Oseney

Hath company, him to disporte and play
And aske vpon a case a clerkes
Ful priuely, after John the carpentere
And he drewe him a parte out of the chirche
And said I not: I sawe him not here wirche
Sithe saturday, I trowe that he be went
For tymbre, there our Abbot hath him sent
For he is wont for tymbre for to go
And dwellen at the graunge a day or two
Or elis he is at his house certayne
Wher that he be, I can not sothly saine.
This Absolon, ful ioly was and lyght
And thought, now is mi time to walk al night
For sekerly, I sawe him nat sterying
About his bote, sith day began to springe
So mote I thriue, I shal at cockes crowe
Ful priuely knocke at his windowe
That stant ful lowe vpon his boures wall
To Alyson wol I nowe tellen all
My loue longyng: for yet I shall nat mysse
That at the leest way I shall her kysse
Some maner comforte shall I haue parfaye
My mouth hath itched al this long daye
That is a sygne of kyssyng at the leest
Al nyght me mette eke, that I was at a feest
Therfore I wol go slepe an hour or twey
And all the nyght than wol I walke & pley.
That wo than that the first cocke hath crow anon
Up riste this ioly louer Absolon
And him arayeth gay, and in queynte deuyce
But first he cheweth greyns and lycorice
To smellen swete, or he had kempte his here
Under his tonge a trueloue he bere
For therby he wende to ben gracyouse
He cometh to the carpenters house
And stylle he stante vnder the shot wyndowe
Unto his brest it raught, it was so lowe
And softe he knocked, with a semly soun.
What do ye honycombe, swete Alysoun:
My faire birde, my swete cynamome
Awaketh lemman myn, and speketh to me
Ful litel thinken ye vpon my wo
That for your loue I swelt there as I go
No wonder is though I swelt & swete
I mone as doth the lambe after the tete
Ywys lemman, I haue suche loue longyng
That lyke a turtle trewe is my mournyng
I may not eaten no more than may a maide
Go fro the wyndowe iacke fool, she sayde
As helpe me god and swete sainte Jame
I loue a nother, or elis I were to blame
Wel bet than the (by Jesu) Absolon
Go forthe thy way, or I wol caste a stone
And let me slepe, a twenty deuelway.
Alas quod Absolon, and welaway
That true loue was euer so yuel bystette
Than kysse me, syn it may be no bette
For Jesus loue, and for the loue of me.
Wilt thou than go thy way therwith quod she.
Certes lemman, quod this Absolon
Than make the redy (quod she) I come anon
And vnto Nycholas she sayd stylle
Now peace, & thou shalt laughe thy fyll
This Absolon down set him vpo his knees
And sayd: I am a lorde at al degrees
For after this, I hope there cometh more
Lemman thy grace, & swete byde thy store.
The window she vndoth, & that in haste
Haue do (quod she) and spede the faste
Let not our neyghbours the aspye.
This Absolo gan wype his mouth ful drye
Derke was the nyght, as pytche or cole
And at the wyndow she put out her ers hole
And Absolon him fette, neyther bet ne werse
But with his mouthe he kyste her bare ers
Ful sauorly, or he were ware of this.
Back he sterte, & thought it was amys
For wel he wyste, a woman had no berde
He felte a thyng al rowe, and longe herde
And sayd: fye, alas what haue I do.
Te he quod she, & clapte the wyndowe to
And Absolon gothe forthe a sory paas
I berde a berde, sayd hende Nycholas
By goddes corpus, this goeth fayre & weie.
This sely Absolon herde it euery dele
And on his lyppe he gan for anger byte
And to him selue he said, I shal the quite
who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lips
With dust, with sonde, with straw, with chyps
But Absolon, that saith ful often alas
My soule betake I to Sathanas
But me were leuer than al this town, quod he
Of this dispite auenged for to be.
Alas (quod he) alas that I ne had yleynt
His hotte loue is colde, and all yqueynt
For fro the tyme that he had kyste her ers
Of paramours he set not a kers
For he was healed of his maladye
Ful ofte paramoures he gan defye
And wepe as doth a chylde that is ybete
A softe pace he wente ouer the strete
Unto a smyth, men callen dan Gerueys
That in his forge smiteth plowe harneys
He sharpeth shares, and coulters bryght
This Absolon knocketh all esily
And said vndo Gerueys, and that anon

What

¶ what who art thou. It am I Absolon
What Absolon, what for Christes swete tre
Why ryse ye so rathe, ey benedicite
What eyleth you for gay gyle god it wote
Hath brought you thus on the berytote
By saynte note, ye wote wel what I mene.
¶ This Absolon ne raught not a bene
Of al his play, no word againe he gaffe
He had more towe on his distaffe
Than Gerueys knewe, & sayd frend so dere
The hote cultre, in the chymeney here
As lene it me, I haue therewith to done
I woll bringe it the agayne ful sone.
¶ Gerueys answered: certes were it golde
Or in a poke nobles al vntolde
Thou shuldest it haue, as I am true smyth
Eye Christes fote, what wol ye don therwith
Therof (quod Absolon) be as be may
I shall wel tellen the by to morowe day
And raught the culter by the colde stele
Ful softe out at the dore gan he stele
And went vnto the carpenters wall
He coughed first, & knocked there withall
Upon the wyndowe, right as he dyd ere.
¶ This Ilyson answerd: who is there
That knocketh so? I warante he is a thefe.
Why nay (quod he) god wot my swete lefe
I am thyn Absolon, thyn owne derlyng
Of gold (quod he) I haue the bronght a ryng
My mother yaue it me, so god me saue
Ful fyne it is, and therto wel ygraue
This wol I yeue the, if thou me kysse.
This Nycholas was rysen for to pysse
And thought he wolde amenden all the iape
He shulde kysse his ers er that he skape
And vp the wyndowe dyd he hastely
And out his ers he put ful priuely
And ouer the buttocke, to the haunche boon
And therwith spake this clerke, this Absolon
Speke swete birde, I not where thou arte.
¶ This Nycholas anon let fleen a farte
As great as it had ben a thunder dent
That with the stroke he was wel nyh yblent
And he was redy with his yron hote
And Nycholas in the arse he smote.
Of gothe the skyn an handbrede aboute
The hotte culter brende so his toute
And for the smerte he wende for to dye
As he were woode, he gan for to crye
Helpe, water, water, for goddes herte.
This carpenter out of his slomber sterte
And herde one crye water, as he were woode
And thought, alas now we cõeth Noes floode
And sette him vp without wordes mo
And with an axe, he smote the corde a two
And downe goth al, he foude neither to sell
Breed ne ale, but downe shortly he fell
Upon the flore, and there a swowne he lay.
¶ Up sterte than Ilyson & hende Nycholay
And cryed out, and harrowe in the strete
The neyghbours, both smal and grete
In ronne, for to gauren on this man
That a swoune lay, pale and wan
For with that fall brosten hath he his arme
But stonden he muste vnto his owne harme
For whan he spake, he was yborne adoun
With hende Nycholas, and Absoun
They tolde euery man, that he was woode
He was agaste so of Noes floode
Through fantasye, that of his vanite
He had getten him knedynge tubbes three
And had hem honged in the roofe aboue
And that he prayed hem for goddes loue
To sytten in the roofe par compayne
The folke gan laughen at his fantasye
And in to the roofe they lyken and they gape
And turned al his ernest into a iape
For what so this carpenter answerde
It was for naught, no man his reason herde
With othes great, he was yswore adowne
That he was holden wood in al that towne
For euerych clerke anon helde with other
They sayd y man was wod, my leue brother
And euery wyght gan laughen at this strife.
¶ Thus swyued was the carpenters wyfe
For al his kepyng, and his ielousye
And Absolon hath kyst her nether eye
And Nicholas is skalded in the toute
This tale is done, & god saue al the route.

¶ Here endeth the Myllers tale: and herafter foloweth the Reues prologue.

WHã folke had laughed at thys nyce caas
Of Absalon and hynd Nicholas
Dyuers folke dyuersly they sayde
But for the more part they lough & playde
Ne at this tale I sawe no man him greue
But it were onely Oswolde the Reue
Bycause he was of carpenters crafte
A lytel yre in his herte plafte
He gan to grutchen and blamen it a lyte

Ho thy quod he, ful wel couthe I ꝑ quyte
With bleryng of a ꝓude millers eye
If that me lyst to speke of rybaudye
But ek I am old, me lust not play for age
Grasse syne is done, my fodder is forage
This white toppe wryteth myn olde yeres
For sothe yolow was, now white ben myn heres
But ꝑdee I fare as doth an openers (eres
That ylke frute is euer lenger the wers
Tyl it be rotten in mollok, or in stre
We olde men, I drede so fare we
Tyl we be rotten can we not be rype
We hoppen alway, while the world wol pype
For in our wyl there sticketh euer a nayle
To haue an hoor heed and a grene tayle
As hath a leke, for though our might be gone
Our wyl desyreth folye euer in one
For whā we may not don, thā wol we speken
Yet in our asshen olde, is fyre yleken.
Four gledes han we, which I shal deuyse
Auauntyng, lyeng, angre, and couetyse
These four sparkles longen on to elde
Our olde lymmes mowe wel ben vnwelde
But wyl ne shall not fayle, that is sothe
And yet haue I alway a coltes tothe
As many a yere as it is passed henne
Syn that my tappe of lyfe began to renne
For sikerly, whan I was borne anone
Dethe drow the tappe of lyfe, and let it gone
And euer syns hath the tappe ꝓunne
Tyll that almost al empeye is the tonne
The stremes of lifenow droppeth on ꝑ chimbe
The sely ronge may wel ringe and chymbe
Of wrecchednes, that passed is ful yore
With olde folke saue dotage is no more.
Whā ꝑ our host had herde this sermoning
He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng
And sayde, what amounteth al this wytte?
What shall we speke all daye of holy wryte?
The deuil made a Reue to preche
Or a fouter a shyppman, or a leche.
Say forth thy tale, and tary not the time
Lo Depford, and it is halfe way prime
Lo Grenewyche, that many a shrewe is in
It were tyme thy tale for to begyn
Nowe sirs quod this Oswalde the Reue
I pray you al, that ye not you greue
Thā I answere, and somdele set his houre
For ofte rith it is with foster, foyre of thoure.
This dronken millers hath ꝓuide vs here
Howe that begyled was a carpenters
Of late wyfe in towne, for I am one
And by youre leue, I shall him quite anon
Right in his chirles termes wol I speke
I pray to god his nekke mote breke
He can wel in mine eye sene a stalke
But in his owne he can not sene a balke.

Here endeth the Reues ꝓlogue.

Here begynneth the Reues tale.

AT Trompyngton, not fer fro Cambrydge
There goth a broke, and ouer that a bridge
Upon the whiche broke there stant a melle
And this is very sothe, as I you telle
A millere was there dwellyng many a day
As any pecocke he was ꝓoude and gay
Pypen he couthe, and fyshen, and nettes bete
And turne cuppes, and wel wraste and shete
Ye by his syde he bare a long panade
And of a swerde ful trenchaūt was the blade
A ioly poplere bare he in his pouche
There nas no mā for peryll dorst him touche
A Sheffelde thwytel bare he in his hose
Round was his face, and camysed was his nose
As ꝓyled as an ape was his skull
He was a market beter at the full
There durst no wyght honde on him ledge
Ne ꝑ he swore he shulde abedge
A theefe he was forsothe, of corne and mele
And that a slye, and vsaunt for to stele
His name was hoten deynous Symkyn
A wyfe he had, comen of noble kyn
The parson of the towne her father was
With her he yaf ful many a panne of bras
For that Symkyn shulde in his blode alye
She was ynorisshed in a nonnerye
For Symkyn wolde no wife, as he sayde
But she were wel ynourisshed, and a mayde
To saue his estate of yomanrye
And she was ꝓoude, and pert as a pye
A ful fayre sight was it vpon hem two
On holy dayes byfore her wolde he go
With his tipet wounden aboute his heed
And she came after in a gyte of reed
And Symkyn had hosen of the same
There durst no wyght clepen her but dame
Was none so hardy, that went by the way
That with her ones durst rage or playe

But

But yf he wouldē be slayne of Symkyn
With panade, or with knife, or bodkyn
For ielous folkes ben perilous euermo
Algates they would her wyues wende so
And eke for she was somdele smoterlyche
She was as dygne as water in a dyche
And as full of hoker, and of besmare
As though that a lady shouldē her spare
What for her kynred, and her norture ye
That she had lerned in the nonnerye.
¶ A doughter had they bytwixt hem two
Of twenty yere, withouten any mo
Sauyng a child ꝑ was of haste yere of age
In cradell it lay, and was a proper page
Thys wenche thicke & well ygrowen was
With camesyd nose, and eyen gray as glas
With buttockes brode, & brestes rounde & hye
But right faire was her heare I wol nat lye
The person of ꝑ town, for she was so fayre
In purpose was to maken her his heyre
Bothe of his catell, and of his mesuage
And straunge he made it of her mariage
His purpose was to bestowen her hye
Into some worthy blode of auncetrye
For holy churches good mote ben dispended
On holy churches blode that is descended
Therfore he wolde, his holy blode honour
Though that he holy churche should deuour.
¶ Great soken hath this Miller out of dout
With wrthe and malte, of al the land about
And namely there was a great college
Ben clepen it ꝑ Soiere hall of Cambrege
Ther was her whete & eke her malt igrounde
And on a day it happed in a stounde
Sicke lay the Mancipie, on a malady
Men wenden wysely that he should dy
For which this miller stale both whete & corn
An hundred tyme more than before
For ther before, he stale but curteisly
But he nowe was a theef outrageously
For which the warden chydde & made fare
But therof set the Miller nat a tare
He craked, bosted, and swore it nas not so
Than were ther yonge poure scolers two
That dwelten in the hall, of whiche I say
Testif they were, and lusty for to play
And onely for her myrthe, and her reuelry
Upon the Warden busily they cry
To yeue hem leaue, but a lytel stounde
To gon to mylle, to se her corne ygrounde
And hardely they durst lay her neeke
The Miller shuld not stele hē half a peeke
Of corne by sleyght, ne by force hem reue
And at the last the warden yaue hem leue
Johan hight that one, & Aleyn hight ꝑ other
Of a town they wer both, ꝑ hight Strother
Farre in the North, can I nat tell where
This Aleyn maketh all redy hys gere
And on a horse, the sacke he caste anon
Forth goth Aleyn the clerke, and also John
With good swerde & buckeler by her syde
Johan knewe the way, hym nedeth no gyde
And at the mil doore the sacke down he layth
¶ Aleyn spake first: alhayle Symkē in fayth
Howe fares thy fayre doughter, & thy wife?
Aleyn welcom (quod Simken) by my life
And John also: how now what do ye here?
By god Simōd (qd John) nede has no pere
Him behoueth serue hiselfe ꝑ has no swayn
Or elis he is a fole, as clerkes sayn
Our Mancipie I hope he wyll be deed
Swa werkes aye the wanges in his heed
And therfore is I come, and eke Alayn
To grynde our corne & cary it home agayn
Wo pray you spede vs heme in that ye may
It shalbe done, quod Simken, be my fay
What woll you don, whiles it is in hande
By god, eyght by the hopper wol I stande
Qd John: & sen how gates the corn goth in
Yet sawe I neuer by my father kyn
Howe that the hopper wagges to and fro
Aleyn answerde: Johan wylt thou so
Than woll I be beneth by my crowne
And se howe the mele falles adowne
Into the throghe, that shalbe my disporte
Qd John, in fay I may bē one of your sorte
I is as yll a myller as is ye.
Thys Myller smylleth at her nicite
And thought al nys don but for a wyle
They wene that no man may hem begyle
But by my thrift, yet shall I blere her eye
For all the sleyght in her philosofye
The more queynte clerkes that they make
The more woll I steale whan I take
In stede of flour yet wol I geue hem bren
The greteste clerkes bē not the wisest menne
As whylom to the wolfe spake the Mare
Of all her art counte I not a tare
¶ Out at the doore he goeth full priuely
Whan that he sawe his tyme, subtelly
He loked vp & downe, tyll he had yfounde
The clerkes horse, ther as he stode ybounde
Behynde the Mylle, vnder a lesell
And to the horse he goth him fayre and well
He strippeth of the bridell eyght anon.
And when ꝑ horse was lose, he gan to gon

Towarde the fen, there wylde mares rynne
And forth, in wehe, through thicke & thinne
The Wyller goeth agayn, no word he sayd
But doth his note, & in theire clerkes playd
Til that her corne was fayre & well grounde
And when the meale was sacked & ybounde
This John goth out, & found her hors away
And gan to cry, harowe and weilaway
Our horse is lost Aleyn for goddes benes
Step on thy fete man, come forth al atenes
Alas our warden has hys palfray lorne.
¶ Thys Aleyn all forgate both mele & corne
All was out of mynde hys husbondrye
What, whylke way is he gon, he gan to crye
The wyfe came leaping inward at a rene
She sayd alas, he goeth to the fenne
With wylde mares, as fast as he may go
Unthanke come on his hond, & bonde hym so
And he that better shulde have knit & reine.
Alas qd John, Aleyn for Christes peyne
Lay down thy swerde, & I shal mine al swa
I is full swifte god wote as is a raa
By goddes sale he shal not shape vs bathe
Why ne hadest thou put the capel in & lathe
Ilheyle Aleyn by god thou is a fonne
¶ These sely clerkes han full fast ironne
Towarde the fenne Aleyn and eke John
And whā the Wyller sawe & they were a gon
He halfe a bushell of her floure hath take
And bad his wyfe knede it in a kake
He said, I trow the clerkes were aferde
Yet can a Wyller make a clerkes berde
For all her arte, yet let hem gon her way
Lo wher they gon, let the children play
They get hym not so lightly by my crowne
These sely clerkes rennen vp and downe
With kepe kepe, iossa, warderere
Ga whylle thou, and I shal kepe hym here
But shortly, tyl it was verey nyght
They couth not, though they did al her might
Her capell catche, he ranne away so fast
Tyll in a dyche they caught him at the last.
¶ Wery and wete as beestes in the rayne
Cometh sely John, & with hi cometh Alayne
Alas (quod John) the day that I was borne
Nowe are we dryuen to herden & to skorne
Our corne is stole, men will vs foles call
Bothe the warden, and our felowes all
And namely the Wyller, waylaway
Thus playneth Jhon, as he goeth by & way
Towarde the myll, & bayarde in his honde
The Wyller sitting by the fyre he fonde
For it was night, & ferther might they nost
But for the loue of god they him besought
Of herbrough and ese, as for her peny.
¶ The Wyller sayd ayen, yf there ben any
Suche as it is, yet shall ye haue your parte
My house is strayte, but ye haue learned arte
Ye can by argument make a place
A myle brode, of twenty foote of space
Let se nowe if this place may suffice
Or make it romer by spethe, as is your gyse
Now Symōd (said John) by saint cutberde
Aye is thou merry, & that is sayre answerde
I haue herd say, men should take of twa thinges
Swilke as he findes, or swilk as he bringes
But specially I pray the host here
Get vs som meate & drinke, & make vs chere
And we will pay trewly at the full
With empty hond, men may no haukes tull.
Lo here our silver redy for to spende.
The miller to the town his doughter sende
For ale and brede and rosted hem a goos
And boūd her hors he should no more go loos
And in his own chambre he made a bedde
With sheetes & with chalons fayre yspredde
Not from his own bedde, ten foote or twelue
His doughter had a bedde all by her selue
Right in the same chambre, by and by
It might be no better, and the cause why.
Ther was no rowmer herbrow in & place
They soupe, & they speken of mirth & solace
And dronken ever strong ale at beste
Adoun midnight went they to reste.
¶ Wel hath this Wyller vernished his berd
Full pale he was for dronken, & nothing reed
He gaspeth, and he spekeith through his nose
As he were in the quacke, or in the pose
To bedde he goeth, and with hym his wyfe
As any Jay was she light and iolyfe
So was her ioly whystell wel ywette
The cradell at the beddes fete was sette
To rocken, & to yeue the childe to sucke
And when & dronken was al in the crucke
To bedde went the doughter right anon
To bedde goth Aleyn and eke John
Ther nas no more, hem neded no dwale
This myller hath so wisely bybbed ale
That as an horse he snorteth in his slepe
Ne of his tayle behynde he toke no kepe
His wyfe bare to hym a bordon well strong
Men might hem here route a forlong
The wenche routeth eke par compayny.
¶ Aleyn the clerke, that herd this melody
He poked on Johan, & sayd: slepest thou
Herdest thou ever swylke a lange er nowe

Lo swylke a coupleyng is ytwyxt hem all
A wylde fyre on her bodyes fall,
Who herde euer swylke a feely thynge,
Ye, they shall haue the floure of yuell endyng
Al this lange nyght tydes me no reste
But yet na force, all shalbe for the beste
For John (sayd he) as euer mote I thryue
If that I may, yon wenche wol I swyue
Some efrement hath law shapen vs
For Johan, there is a lawe that saith thus
That if a man in one poynte ben a greued
That in an other he shal be releued
Our rowne is stolen, sothly it is no nay
And we haue had an yuell fyt to day
And tyn I shall haue none amendement
Agayne my losse I wyll haue myn efement
By goddes sale, it shal none other be.
¶ This Johan answerd: Aleyn, auyse the
The myller is a perilous man, he sayde
And if that he out of his slepe abrayde
He myght don vs bath a vilonye.
Aleyn answerd: I cost him not worth a flye
And vp he rest, & by the wenche he crept.
This wenche lay vpright, & fast slept
Tyl he so nye was, er she myght aspye
That it had ben to late for to crye
And shortly for to sayne, they were at on
Now play Ale yn, for I woll speke of John.
This John lay styl a forlonge way or two
And to him selfe he maketh routh and wo
Alas (quod he) this is a wicked iape
Nowe may I say, I is but an ape
Yet hath my felowe somwhat for his harme
He hath the millers doughter in his arme
He auntreth him, and hath his nede yspedde
And I lye as a drasse sacke in my bedde
And whan this iape is tolde another day
I shal be holde a dasse, or a cokeney
I wol aryse, and auntre me it by my fay
Unhardy is vnsely, thus men say.
And vp he rose, and softely he went
Unto the cradel, and in his arme it hent
And bare it softly to his beddes fete
Sone after the wyfe her routyng lete
And gan awake, and went her out to pysse
And came again, & gan the cradel mysse
And groped here & there, but she founde none
Alas (quod she) I had almost mysgone
I had almost gone to the clerkes bedde
Eye benedycite, than had I foule yspedde
And forth she goth, tyl she the cradel fonde
She groperth alway further with her honde
And fond the bedde, & thought nat but good
Bycause that the cradell by it stode
And nist where she was, for it was derke
But fayre & well she crept in by the clerke
And lieth ful styl, & wold haue caught a slepe
Within a while this John the clerke vp lepe
And on this good wyfe he layd ful sore
So mery a fyt had she nought full yore
And pryked hard & depe, as he were madde
This ioly life haue these two clerkes ladde
Tyll that the thirde cocke began to sing
¶ Aleyn waxe wery in the dawning
For he had swonken all the long nyght
And sayd, fare wel Malyn swete wyght
The day is comen, I may no lenger byde
But euermo, where so I go or ryde
I am thine owne clerke, so haue I hele.
Now dere lemman (quod she) go, farewele
But or thou go, one thyng I woll the tell
When thou wendest homwarde by the mell
Right at the enter of the dore behynde
Thou shalt a cake of halfe a bushel fynd
That was ymaked of thyn owne mele
Whiche that I helpe my syre to stele
And good lemman god the saue and kepe
And with y wordes she gan almost to wepe
¶ Aleyn vprist and thought er it dawe
He wolde go crepe in by his felawe
And found the cradell with his hande anon
By god thought he, al wrong haue I gon
My heed is totey of my swynke to nyght
That maketh me that I go not aryght
I wot wel y by the cradell I haue misse go
Here lieth the Myller and his wife also
And forth he goeth on twenty deuyl way
Unto the bedde, there as the myller lay
He wende haue croped by his felowe John
And by the Miller he crepte in anon
And caught him by the necke, & soft he spake
And sayd: John, thou swinesheed awake.
For Cristes soule, and here a noble game
For by that lorde, that called is seynt Jame
As I haue thryse in this shorte nyght
Swyued y millers doughter bolt vpryght
Whyles thou hast, as a coward ben agaste.
Ye falsе harlot (quod the miller) haste
A falsе traytour, falsе clerke (quod he)
Thou shalte be deed by goddes dignite
Who durst be so bolde to disparage
My doughter, that is come of suche linage
And by the throte bolle he caught Aleyn
And he hym hente dispytously agayn
And on the nose he smote hym with his fist
Downe ran the blode stremyng vpon his brist

And

And in the flore, with mouth a nose ybroke
They walowen, as doth pygges in a poke
And vp they gon, and downe ayene anon
Tyll that the Myller spurned on a stone
And downe he fell backwarde vpon his wife
That wyst nothyng of this myer stryfe
For she was fall a slepe a lytell wyght
With John the clerke, ꝑ waked had al night
And with the fall out of her slepe she brayde
Helpe holy crosse of Bromholme she sayd
In manus tuas, lorde to the I call
Awake Simonde, the fende is on me fall
My hert is broken, helpe I am but deed
There lieth one on my wombe & on my heed
Helpe Symkyn, for these false clerkes fight
This John stert vp, as fast as euer he might
And graspeth by the walles to and fro
To fynde a staffe, and she stert vp also
And knewe the estres bet than did this John
And by the wall she fownd a staffe anon
And sawe a lytell shemering of a lyght
For at an hole in shone the mone bryght
And by that lyght she sawe hem both two
But sikerly she nyste who was who
But as she sey a whyte thing in her eye
And when she gan this whyte thing aspye
She wend the clerke had wered a voluper
And with ꝑ staffe she drowe alway ner & ner
And wend have hit this Aleyn at full
And smote the miller on the pyled skull
That down he goth, & cryed, harrowe I dye
These clerkes bete hym well & let him lye
And arayeth hem, and toke her horse anon
And eke her meale, and on her way they gon
And at the mylle dore they toke her cake
Of halfe a bushell floure, well ybake.
Thus is the proud myller well ybete
And hath ylost the grendyng of the whete
And payd for the supper euery dele
Of Aleyn and of John, that bete hym wele
His wyfe is fowred, and his doughter als
Lo suche it is a myller to be fals
And therfore this prouerbe is full sothe
Hym dare not wel wene that yuel dothe
A gylour shal hym self begyled be
And god that sitte in hye maieste
Sende al this company, great and smale
Thus have I quite the myller in his tale.

Here endeth the Reues tale, and here followeth the Cokes prologue.

The Coke of London whyle the Reue spake
For ioy he thought the claude hym on the bake
A ha (quod he) for Cristes passion
This Myller hath a sharpe conclusion
Upon his argument of herbygage
Well sayd Salamon in his langage
Ne bring not euery man into thyn hous
For herbrowyng by nyght is perilous
Well ought a man auysed for to be
Whom that he broght into his priuete
I pray to god so yeue me sorowe and care
If euer sythen I bigat Hodge of ware
Herd I miller bette ylette a werse
Ne had a tape of malice in the herse.
But god forbyd that we stynten here
And therfore yf ye vouchesafe to here
A tale of me, that am a poore man
I wol tell you as wel as I can
A lytell tape, that fell in our cyte.
Our hoste sayd, sir I graunt it the
Nowe tell on Rodger, loke that it be good
For many a pasty hast thou letten blood
And many a Jacke of Douer hast thou solde
That hath ben twyse hote and twyse colde
Of many a pilgrim hast thou Cristes curse
For of thy perisle yet fare they the worse
That they have eaten with thy Noble goos
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos
Nowe tell on gentle Rogere by thy name
But yet I pray the be not wroth for game
A man may say full sothe in game & play.
Thou sayst ful sothe (qd Roger) by my fay
But sothe play, quade play, as ꝑ flemig saith
And therfore Henry Bayly by thy faith
Be thou not wroth, or we departen here
Though that my tale ben of an hostelere
But nathelesse, I wol not telle it yet
But er we part, ywys thou shalt be quite
And therwithall he lough and made chere
And sayd hys tale, as ye shullen after here.

Here endeth the Cokes prologue, and here followeth hys tale.

A prentise whilom dwelt in oure cite
And of the craft of hy-
taylers was he
Galyarde he was, as
goldfinch in ỳ shawe
Brown as a bery, a pro
per short felawe
With lockes blacke, ke mt full fetously
Daunce he couth full well and iolily
He was called Perkyn Revelour
He was as full of loue and paramour
As is the hyue full of hony swete
Well was the wench with him might mete
At euery bridal would he singe and hoppe
He loued bette the tauernes than the shoppe
For when any rydyng was in chepe
Out of the shoppe thider would he lepe
Tyll that he had of all the sight ysayn
And daunced wel, he would not come ageyn
And gather hym a meyny of hys sorte
To hope and syng, and make such disporte
And there they sette steuyn for to mete
To playen at the dyse in suche a strete
For in the cyte nas there no prentyse
That fayrer couth caston a payre of dyse
Than Perkyn couth, and therto he was free
Of his dispence, in place of pryuyte
That found his mayster well in his chaffare
For oftymes he founde his bore full bare
For sykerly, a prentyse reuelour
That haunteth dyse, ryot, or paramour
His mayster shall it in hys shoppe abye
Al haue he no parte of the mynstralcye
For thefte and ryotte, they ben conuertyble
Al can he play on getteren or on rebible
Reuell and reuth, as in lowe degre
They ben full wrothe al day, as men may se
This ioly prentyse, with his maister abode
Tyll he were nye out of hys prentyshode
Al were he snybbed bothe early and late
And somtyme ledde with reuel to Newgate
But at the last, his maister hym bethought
Upon a day, when he his paper sought
Of a prouerbe, that sayeth this same worde
Wel bette is rotten apple out of horde
Than that it rote all the remnaunt
So fareth it by a ryotous seruaunt
It is muche lesse harme to let hym passe
Than he shende al the seruaūtes in the place
Therfore his maister gaue hym a quitaunce
And badde him go, with sorow & mischaunce
And thus this ioly prentise had his leue

Nowe let hym ryot al the nyght or leue
And for ther is no theke without a loube
That helpeth hym to waste or to soube
Of that he bribe can, or borowe may
Anon he sent hys bedde and hys aray
Unto a compere of his owne sorte
That loued dyse, reuell and disporte
And had a wyfe, that held for countenaunce
A shoppe, & swyued for her sustenaunce.

Here endeth the Cokes tale, and here followeth the man of lawes prologue.

Our hoste sawe well, that the bright sonne
The arke of hys artificiall day hath ronne
The fourth parte, and halfe an houre more
And though he were not depe expert in lore
He wyste it was the eyghtene day
Of Aprill, that is the messanger to May
And sawe wel, that the shadowe of euery tre
Was in lengthe, the same quantite
As was the body erect, that caused it
And therfore by the shadowe he tooke his wit
That Phebus, which ỳ shone clere & bright
Degrees was fourty clomben of hight
And for that day, as in latitude
It was ten of the clocke, he gan conclude
And sodenly he pligh hys horse aboute.
Lordinges (quod he) I warne you al ỳ route
The fourth part of this day is gon
Nowe for the loue of god and of seint John
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may
Lordynges ỳ time wasteth both night & day
And stealeth from vs, what priuely sleping
And what through negligēce, in our waking
As doth the streme, that turneth neuer again
Discending fro ỳ mountayne into the playn
Wel can Seneke, and many a Philosofre
By wayling tyme, more than golde in cofre
For losse of catell may recouered be
But losse of tyme shendeth vs (quod he)
It wol not come ayen withouten drede
No more than of Malkyns mayden hede
When she hath lost it in her wantonnesse
Let vs not mowlen thus in ydelnesse.
Sir man of lawe (quod he) so haue I blis
Tell vs a tale anon, as forwarde is
Ye ben submitted, through your fre assent
To stonden in thys case at my iudgment
Acquiteth

Rouerth you nowe of youre behestes
Than haue you don youre deuer at the leste.
I hope (quod he) he pardeuy ne nede
To byche forwarde is not myn entente
Myn hoste is herre, and I woll holde fayne
At my beheste, I can no better fayne
For such lawe as a man prueth an other wight
He shulde himselfe vse it by right
Thus wol our text: but nathelesse certayne
I can right nowe no thrifty tale fayne
That Chaucer (though he can but lewdly
On metres and in rymyng crafterly)
Hath layd hem, in such englyshe as he can
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man
And if he haue not sayd hem lewe or wrother
In one boke, he hath sayd hem in a nother
For he hath told of louers vp and doun
Mo than Ouide made of mencion
In his epistelis, that ben full olde
What shuld I rellen hem, sithe they be tolde
In youthe he made of ful many a lay
And sithen he hath spoken of euerychone
These noble wyues, and these louers eke
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Cleped the seintes lyues of Cupide
There may he se the large woundes wide
Of Lucresse, and of Babilon Thisbe
The swerde of Dido for the false Enee
The tre of Phillis for her Demophoon
The playnt of Dyanire, and of Hermion
Of Adriadna, and of Hipsiphile
The barayne yle stondyng in the se
That dreynt Leandre for Hero
The teres of Heleyn, and eke the wo
Of Brixseis, and of Laodomia
The cruelty of quene Medea
The lytell childre hongyng by the hals
For the Jason, that was of loue so fals
Of Hypermistra, Penelope, and Alceste
Your wyfehod he comendeth with the beste
But certeynly no wordes ne writeth he
Of thylke wicked ensample of Canace
That loued her owne brother synfully
Of suche cursed stories I say fy
Vpon hem alle, lat hem lye with sorowe
To rede of hem, or speke or thynke or sowne
Better were to me to byden my penaunce
Than rede hem, or yet have hem in remembraunce
But of my tale how shall I don this day
Me were lothe be lykened douteles
To Muses, that men clepeth Pierides
Methamorphoseos wolde what I mene
But nathelesse I recche not a bene
Though I come after hem with hawbake
I speke in prose, and let him rymes make
And with that worde, he with a sobre chere
Began his tale, as ye shullen after here.

Here endeth the man of lawes prologe, & here followeth his tale.

Hateful harme, condycion of pouert
With thurst, with colde, with hunger so confounded
To asken helpe, the shame it doth me hert
If that thou aske, wyth nede þ art so woũded
That hyde nede vnwrappeth all thy woũdes
Maugre thyn hed, þ must for indygence (hyd
Or stele, or begge, or borowe thy dispence

Thou blamest Crist, & saist ful bytterly
He misdeparteth richesse temporall
Thy neyghbour thou wytest synfully
And sayest, thou hast to lytel, & he hath all
Parfay (saist thou) sometyme he rekken shall
Whan that his tayle shall brenne in glede
For he nought helpeth needful in his nede.

Herken what is the sentence of the wise
Better is to dyen, than to haue indygence
Thyn owne neyghbour wol the dispyse
If thou be poore, farwel thy reuerence
Yet of the wyse man take this sentence
Al the dayes, poore men ben wicke
Beware therfore or þ come to the pyke

If thou be poore, thy brother hateth the
And al thy frendes fleen fro the, alas
O ryche marchaunces full of wele be ye
O noble prudent folke, as in this cas
Your bagges ben not fylled with ambes as
But with sys synke, þ renneth for your chaunce
At Crystemasse, merry may ye daunce.

Ye seken lond & see for your wynnynges
As wise folke ye knowen al the stare
Of regnes, ye ben fathers of tydynges
And tales, bothe of peace and debate

I was

I was right nowe of tales desolate
Here that a marchant, gone is many a yere
Me taught a tale, which ye shullen here.

In Surrey whilom dwelte a company
Of chapmen riche, and therr to sad and trewe
That wide where sented her spicery
Clothes of golde, and satten ryche of hewe
Her chafare was so thrifty and so newe
That euery wight hath deyntie to chafare
With hem, and eke to sellen hem her ware.

Now fel it, that the maisters of that sorte
Han shapen hem, to Rome for to wende
Were it for chapmanhode, or for disporte
Non other messegere wolde they thyder sende
But comē hem selfe to Rome, this is the ende
And in suche place as thought hem auaūtage
For her entent, they taken her herbygage.

Sojourned han these marchaūtes in ỳ town
Certayne tyme, as fel to her plesaunce
But so byfel, that the excellent renowne
Of ỳ emperours doughter dame Custaūce
Reported was, with euery circumstaunce
Unto these surreyn marchaūtes, in such wise
Fro day to day, as I shal you deuyse.

This was the comen voyce of euery man
Our emperour of Rome, god him se
A doughter hath, that sithen ỳ worlde began
To reken as wel her goodnes as her beaute
Nas neuer suche a nother as is she
I pray to god in honour her sustene
And wolde she were of all Europe the quene

In her is hie beautie, without pryde
Youth, without grenhed or folye
To al her workes vertue is her guyde
Humbles hath slayne in her al tyrannye
She is a myrrour of all curtesye
Her hert is bery chambre of holynes
Her honde minister of fredom ỳ almes.

And all this voice was sothe, as god is trew
But nowe to ourre purpose let vs turne ayen
These marchātes han don fret her ships new
And whā they han this blisfull mayden seyn
Home to Surrey ben they went ageyn
And don her nedes, as they han don yore
And lyuen in welth, I can say no more.

Now fel it, ỳ these marchātes stode in grace
Of him that was the Soudon of Surrye
For whā ỳ they came frō any straūge place
He wold of his benygne curtesye
Make hem good chere, ỳ besyly aspye
Tydinges of sondry realmes for to lere
The wonders ỳ they myght seen or here

Amonge other thinges specially (taūce
These marchātes haue him told of dāe Cus-
So great noblesse, in ernest seryously
That this Soudō hath cauzt so gret plesāce
To han her fygure in his remembraunce
And al his luste, and al his besy cure
Was for to loue her, while his lyfe may dure

Paraventure in that yike large boke
Which ỳ cleped is the heuen, ywryten was
With sterres, whan that he his byrth toke
That he for loue shuld han his death, alas
For in the sterres, clerer than nis the glas
Is writte god wot, who so could it rede
The deth of euery man withouten drede

In sterres many a wynter there byfore
Was writtē the deth of Hector ỳ of Achilles
Of Pompey ỳ Julyus, or they were bore
The stryfe of Thebes, and of Hercules
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deth: but that mens wittes ben so dull
That no wyght can wel rede it at the full

This Soudon for his pryue counsayle sent
And shortly of this mater for to pace
He hath to hem declared al his entent
And said hem certain, but if he mizt have gra-
To haue Custāce, within a lytel space (ce
He nas but deed, ỳ charged hem to hie
To shapen for his lyfe some remedye.

Diuers men, diuersly they sayden
The argument they casten vp and down
Many a subtel reason forthe they layden
They speken of Magike, and abusioun
But fynally, as in conclusioun
They can not sene in ỳ non auauntage
Ne in non other way, saue in mariage.

Then saw they therin suche difficulte
By way of reason, to speke al playne
Bycause that there was suche diuersite
Bitwene her both lawes, ỳ they sayne
They trowe ỳ no christen prince wold fayne

Bredden his childe vnder our lawes swete
That vs was tawȝt, by mahoũd our pȝophet

¶ And he answerd: rather than I lese
Custaunce, I wol be chȝistien douteles
I mote ben hers, I may non other chese
I pȝay you holde your argumentes in pees
Sauerth my lyfe, and be not recheles
To gerten her, that hath my lyfe in cure
Foȝ in this wo, I may not long endure

¶ What nedeth greater delatacyon
I say, by treatie and ambassadȝye
And by the popes mediation
And all the chirche, and all the cheualry
That in distruction of Maumetry
And in encrease of Chȝistes lawe dere
They ben accoȝded, as ye shall here.

¶ Howe that the Soudon and his baronage
And al his lieges, shuld ichȝistened be
And he shall han Custaunce in mariage
And certayne golde, I not what quantite
And her to fynde sufficient surete
The same accoȝde was swoȝne on either side
Now faire Custãce, almyghty god the gyde.

¶ Now wolden som men waiten, as I gesse
That I shulde tellen all the purueyaunce
That the Emperour of his nobiesse
Hath shapen foȝ his doughter dame Custãce
Well may men knowen, that so gret oȝdynãce
May no mantellen in a lytell clause
As was arayde foȝ so highe a cause.

¶ Bishoppes ben shapen yͭ her foȝ to wende
Lordes and ladies, & knyghtes of renowne
And other folke ynowe this is the ende
And notified is thȝoughout the towne
That euery wight, with great deuotioun
Shulde pȝay Chȝist, that he this mariage
Receyue in gree, and spede this voiage.

¶ The day is come of her departyng
I say the wofull day natural is come
That there maye be no lenger tarieng
But foȝwarde they hem dȝesse al and some
Custance, that with sorowe is all ouercome
Full pale aris̄, and dȝessed her to wende
Foȝ well she sey, there is none other ende.

¶ Alas, what wondȝe is it though she wepte
That shal be sent to a straunge nation
Fro frendes, that so tenderly her kepte
And to be bounden vnder subiection
Of one, she knoweth not his condition
Husbondes ben all good and han ben yoze
That knowen wyues, I dare say no moze

Father (she said) thy wȝetched childe Custãce
Thy yonge daughter, fostred vp so softe
And ye my mother, my soueraigne pieſance
Ouer al thing (out take Chȝist on lofte)
Custaunce your childe her cõmaundeth ofte
Unto your grace: foȝ I shal to Surrye
Ne shal I neuer moȝe se you with eye.

¶ Alas, vnto the Barbary nation
I must anon, sithen it is your wyl
But Chȝist that starfe foȝ our redempcion
So ȝeue me grace, his hestes to fulfyll
I wȝetched woman no foȝce though I spyll
Wo mẽ arn boȝne to thȝaldom and penaunce
And to ben vnder mannes gouernaunce.

I trow at Troy, whã Thurus brake ꝑ wal
Of Ilyon, ne whan bȝent was Thebes eyte
Ne Rome foȝ the harme of Hanybal
That Romains hath inkurssed times thȝe
Nas herd, such tendȝe wepyng foȝ pyte
As was in the chambȝe foȝ her departyng
But foȝth she mote, whether she wepe oȝ sing

¶ O firsl mouyng cruel firmament
With thy diurnal swegh, that croudest aye
And hurtlest al fro est to Occident
That naturally wolde holde another way
Thy croudyng set the heuen in suche array
At the begynnyng of this feres voyage.
That cruel Mars hath slaine this mariage.

¶ O infortunate assendent foztuous
Of which the lozde is helpelesse fal, alas
Out of his angle, into his derkest house
O Mars, O occisier, as in this caas
O feble Mone, vnhappy ben thy paas
Thou knittest ꝑ there ꝑ nart not receyued
Ther thou were wel, fro thẽce art ꝑ wayued

¶ Imprudent Emperour of Rome, alas
Was there no philosofer in thy towne?
Is no tyme bette than other in suche cas?
Of voiage, is there non electiowne?
Namely to folke of hye condicioun
Nat whan a rote is of a byrthe knowe
Alas we ben to leude, oȝ to slowe

¶ To

¶ To ship is dronghe this wofull faire mayd
Solempnely, with euery circumstaunce
Now Jesu Christ be with you all (she sayd)
Ther nys no more, but farewel faire Custáce
She payneth her to make good countenance
And forthe I let her sayle in this manere
And tourne I will agayne to my matere.

¶ Explicit prima pars: et sequitur pars secunda.

The mother of the Soudon, wel of vices
Aspied hath her sonnes playn entent
Howe he wol lete his olde sacrifices
And right anon, she for her counsaile sent
And they ben comen, to know what she ment
And whan assembled was this folke in fere
She set her down, & said, as ye shall here.

¶ Lordes (quod she) ye knowen euerychone
Howe that my sonne is in poynt to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron
Yeuen by goddes messenger Machomete
But ouer auowe to grete god I here
The lyfe shal rather out of my body stert
Or Machometes lawe go out of my hert

¶ What shulde vs tyden of thys newe lawe
But thral dome to our bodyes and penaunce
And afterwarde in hel to ben drawe
For we reneyed Mahounde our creaunce
But lordes, wol ye make assuraunce
As I shal say, assentyng to my lore
And I shal make vs safe for euermore.

¶ They sworen, & assenten euery man
To lyue with her and dye, and by her stonde
And euerych in the best wise that he can
To strengthen her, shall his frendes fonde
And she hath this empryse take in honde
Whiche ye shall here, that I shal deuise
And to hem al she spake in this wise.

¶ We shul vs first faine, christendom to take
Colde water shal not greue vs but a lyte
And I shall suche a reuell and a feest make
That as I trowe, I shall the Soudon quite
For tho his wife be christened neuer so white
She shall haue nede to washe away the rede
Though she a fonte full of water w her lede

¶ O Soudanesse, roote of iniquite
Virago, thou Semyram the secounde
O serpent vnder femenynete
Lyke to the serpent depe in hell ybounde
O fayned woman, al that may confounde
Vertue & innocence, thrwoughe thy malyce
Is bredde in the, a nest of euery vyce

¶ O Sathan envyous, sin thylke day
That thou were chased from our heritage
Wel knewest thou to women the olde way
Thou madest Eue to bringe vs in seruage
Thou wolt forgone this christen mariage
Thy instrument, so welaway the whyle
Makest thou of wom̃, whan ỹ wolt begyle.

¶ This Soudõnesse, whom I blame & wery
Let priuely her counsayle gon her way
What shulde I in this tale lenger tarye
She rydeth to the Soudon on a day
And sayd him, that she wolde renye her lay
And christendom of prestes hondes fonge
Repentyng her, she hethen was so longe

¶ Beseechyng him, to done her that honour
That she might haue the christẽ folke to feste
To plesen hem, I wol done my labour
The Soudon sayth, I wol don at your heste
And knelyng, thanketh her of that requeste
So glad he was, he nyst not what to say
She kist her sonne, & home she goth her way.

¶ Arriued ben these christen folke to londe
In Surrie, with a great solempne route
And hastely this Souden sent his sonde
First to his mother, & all the reygne aboute
And sayd, his wife was comen out of doute
And prayden hem for to ryden ayenst ỹ quene
The honoure of his reigne for to sustene.

¶ Great was the preste, & riche was the raye
Of Surreyens, and Romayns pinette pfete
The mother of the Soudon, ryche and gay
Receyueth her with all glad chere
As any mother myght her doughter dere
Vnto the nexte cite there beside
Thus softe paas solempnely they ride.

¶ Nought trowe I, the triumphe of Julius
Of which ỹ Lucan maketh suche a boste
Was royaller, and more curious
Than was thassemblyng of this blisful hoste
But this Scorpion, this wicked goste

The soudanesse, for al hir flatterynge
Caste vnder al this, ful mortally to dynge

¶ The soudon cometh hymself soone after this
So royally, that wonder is to telle
He welcometh hir with mochel ioye & blys
And thus in myrthe & ioy I let hem dwelle
The fruite of euery tale is for to telle
Whan time come, men thought it for the best
That vnto bedde tyme, and men gon to reste

¶ The tyme come, this olde soudanesse
Ordayned hath the feste, of which I rolde
And to the feste, cristen folke hem dresse
In general, both yong and olde
There may men feste and royalte beholde
And deyntes mo than I can deuyse
But all to dere they boughten it or they ryse

¶ O soudon, wo the euer thou art successour
To worldly blysse, spronge with bytternesse
The ende of ioye, of our worldly labour
Wo occupieth the ende of our gladnes
Herken this counsaile, for thy sykernes
Upon thy glad day have thou in mynde
The vnware wo or harm, that cometh behynde

¶ For shortly to tellen at a worde
The soudon, and the cristen everychone
Ben al to hewe, & slyked at the borde
But it were onely dame Custaunce alone
This olde soudanesse, cursed crone
Hath with hir frendes don thys cursed dede
For she hir selfe wolde all the countrede

Ne there was sarrasin none that was conuerted
That of the counsaile of the soudon wot
That he nas al to hewe, er he asterted
And Custaunce han they taken anon forthot
And in a shippe all stereles (god wot)
They han her set, & bidden her ferne to sayle
Out of Surrey ayenwarde to Itayle.

¶ A certayne treasour, that the tydder ladde
And soth to sayne, vitayle great plente
They han her yeuen, & clothes eke she had
And forth she sayleth in the salte se
O my Custaunce, ful of benygnite
O Emperours yong doughter dere
He that is lorde of fortune, be thy stere.

¶ She blesseth her, & with full pytous voice
Unto the croise of Christ, thus sayd she.

O clere, o welful auter, holy croice
Red of the lambes blode, ful of pyte
That wesshe the worlde fro the olde iniquite
Me fro the fende, and fro his clawe kepe
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe

¶ Victorious tree, protection of trewe
That onely worthy were for to bere
The kyng of heuen, with his woundes newe
The white lambe, that hurt was with a spere
Fleemere of frendes, out of him and here
On whiche thy limmes, fairyfully extenden
Me kepe, & yeue me myght my life to amenden

¶ Yere & dayes fleteth this creature
Throughout the see of Grece, vnto the straite
Of Marocke, as it was her auenture
O, many a sory mele may she bayte
After her deth ful oft may she wayte
Or that the wylde wawes wold her dryue
Unto the place there she shulde aryue.

¶ Men might asken, why she was not slayn
Eke at the feste, who myghte her body saue?
I answere to that demaunde agayn
Who saued Daniel in that horrible caue?
Ther euery wyght, wer he maister or knaue
Was with the lyon frette or he asterte
No wight but God, that he bare in hys herte.

¶ God lyst to shewe his wonderful miracle
In her, for she shuld shewe his myghty werkes
Crist that is to euery harme tryacle
By certain meanes often, as knowen clerkes
Doth thing for certayn ende, that full derke is
To mans wytte, that for our ygnoraunce
Ne can nat know his prudent purueyaunce

¶ Now sith that she was not at the feste yslawe
Who kepeth her fro the drenching in the see?
Who kept Jonas in the fyshes mawe
Tyl he was spouted out at Ninyue?
Wel may men knowe, it was no wight but he
That kept the people Ebrak from drenching
With drie fete, thrugh the see passyng

Who hath the four spirites of the tempeste
That power han, bothe to anoye londe & see
Bothe north and south, and also west & este
Anoyeth neyther see, ne londe, ne tree
Soothly the comaunder therof was he
That fro the tempest aye this woman kepte
As wel whan she woke as whan she slepte

where

Wher might this womā mete & drinke haue
Thre yere & more, howe lasteth her vitayle
Who fed the Egrpcyan Mary in the caue
Or in desert (none but Christ sans fayle)
Fyue thousād falke it was as great marualle
With loues fyue and fyshes two to fede
God sent his foyson at her great nede.

¶ She driueth forth in to our Occian
Throughout the wilde see, tyl at the laste
Under han holde, that nempne I ne can
Fer in Northumberlond, the wawe her caste
And in the sande her shippe sticked so faste
That thence nolde it not of all a tyde
The will of Christ was ꝑ she shuld ther abide

¶ The constable of the castel downe is fare
To seue this wrecke, & al ꝑ shyp he sought
And founde this wery woman full of care
He fōde also the tresoure that she brought
In her langage, mercy she besought
The lyfe out of her body for to twyn
Her to deliuer of wo that she was in.

¶ I maner latyn corrupte was her speche
But al gates therby was she vnderstonde
The constable, whan him lyst no lenger seche
This wofull woman brought he to londe
She knelerh downe, & thanketh gods sonde
But what she was, she wolde no man sey
For soule ne fayre, though she shuld dey

¶ She said she was so mased in the see
That she forgate her mynde, by her trouth
The constable of her hath so great pyte
And eke his wife, that they wepen for routhe
She was so dylygent withouten slouthe
To serue & plese euerych in that place
That al her louen, ꝑ loken in her face

The cōstable, & dame Hermegilde his wyfe
Were paynems, & that contre euery where
But Hermegylde loued her right as her lyfe
And Custaūce hath so long soiourned there
In orisons, with many a bytter tere
Tyl Jesu hath conuerted through his grace
Dame Hermegylde, cōstablesse of that place.

In al that londe durst no christen route
Al christen folke ben fled from ꝑ countre
Through paynems, that cōquered all about
The plages of the North, by londe & see
To wales fledde the christianyte
Of olde Bretons, dwellyng in that Ile
There was her refute, for the meane whyle

But yet nas ther neuer christē breto̅ so exiled
That there nas some in her priuete
Honoured Christe, & heathen folke begyled
And nye the castel suche there dwellen thre
That one of hem was blynd, & might not se
But it were with thylke eyen of his mynde
With whiche men seen, after they ben blynde

¶ Bright was the sunne, as in somers day
For whiche the constable, and his wife also
And Custaunce, han taken the right way
Towarde the see, a furlong way or two
To playen, and to romen to and fro
And in her walke, thre blynde men they met
Croked and olde, with eyen faste yshet

In ꝑ name of Christ, cryed this blynd breton
Dame Hermegylde, reue me syght againe
This lady warc a frayde of the soun
Lest that her husbonde, shortly for to sayne
Wold her for Jesus Christes lore haue slaine
Til Custāce made her bold, & bad her werch
The wyl of Christ, as doughter of his cherch

¶ The constable wore abashed of that syght
And sayd: what amounteth al this fare
Custaunce answerd: sir it is Christes myght
That helpeth folke oute of the fendes snare
And so forforth she gan our lawe declare
That the the constable, er that it was eue
Cōuerted hath, & on Christ made him byleue

This cōstable was nothing lord of this place
Of which I speke, there he Custaunce fonde
But kept it strongly, many a wynter space
Under Alla, kyng of Northumberlonde
That was ful wise, & worthy of his honde
Agayne the Scottes, as men may wel here
But turne I wol agayne to my matere.

¶ Sathan, ꝑ euer vs wayteth to begyle
Sawe of Custaunce all her perfectioun
And caste anon how he myght quite her wyle
And made a yonge knyght, ꝑ dwelt in ꝑ toun
Loue her so hotte, of foule affectioun
That verily, him thought ꝑ he shulde spyll
But he of her ones myght haue his wyll.

¶ He wopeth her, but it auayled nought
She wold do no synne by no wey

And for dispyte, he compassed in his thought
To maken her on shamful dethe to dey
He wayteth whan the constable is awey
And priuely on a nyght he crepte
In to Hermegyldes chambre while she slepte

Cwery forwaked in her orisons
Sleepeth Custaunce and Hermegylde also
This knyght, through Sathans temptacõs
Al softely is to the bedde ygo
And cut the throte of Hermegylde a two
And laid the blody knyfe by dame Custance
And wẽt his way, ther god yeue hi mischãce

Sone after cometh the cõstable home againe
And eke Alla, that kyng was of that londe
And sawe his wyfe dispytously islayne
For whiche he wept and wronge his honde
And in the bedde the blody knyfe he fonde
By dame Custãce, alas what might she saye
For very wo, her wytte was all away

To kyng Alla was tolde al this mischaunce
And eke the tyme, & where, and in what wyse
That in a shyppe was foundẽ this Custaũce
As here before ye han herde me deuyse
The kynges hert, for pyte gan agrise
Whan he sawe so benygne a creature
Fal in disease and in misaduenture

For as ỳ lambe toward his deth is brought
So stant this innocent before the kyng
This fals knight, ỳ hath this treso wrought
Bereth her on hõde, ỳ she hath don this thyng
But natheles there was great mornyng
Among the people, & sayd they can not gesse
That she had done so great a wyckednesse

For they han sene her euer so vertuouse
And louyng Hermegyle, right as her lyke
Of this bare witnesse euerych in ỳ house
Saue he that Hermegyle slow wt his knyfe
This gentle kyng hath caught a gret motife
Of this witnes, & thought he wold enquere
Depet in this case, the trouth to lere

Alas Custaũce, thou hast no champyon
Ne fyght canst thou not, so welaway
But he that starfe for our redempcion
And bonde Sathan, & yet lyth there he lay
So be thy strauge champyon this day
For but if Crist on the myracle kythe
Without gyle ỳ wyst ben slayne alwythe

She set her down on knees, & thus she sayd
Immortall god, that sauedest Susanne
Fro falce blame, & thou mercyful mayde
Marye I mene, doughter to seynt Anne
Before whose childe angels syng Osanne
If I be gyltesse of this felonye
My socoure be, or elis shall I dye

Haue ye not sene sometyme a pale face
(Among a prees) of him that hath ben lad
Toward his deth, wher as him get no grace
And suche a colour in his face hath had
That mẽ might know his face ỳ was bystad
Amonges al the faces in that route
So standeth Custaũce, & loketh her aboute

O quenes, lyuyng in prosperite
Duchesses, and ye ladyes euerychon
Haue some routhe on her aduersite
An emperours doughter stante alone
She hath no wyst, to whõ to make her mone
O bloode royal, that stondeth in thys drede
Fer ben thy frendes at thy great nede.

This Alla kyng, hath suche compassyoun
As gentle herte is ful of pyte
That from his eyen ran the water doun.
Now hastely do fette a boke (quod he)
And if this knight wol swere, how that she
This womman slowe, yet wol we vs auyse
Whom that we wol shall ben our iustyce

A breton boke, written with Euangeles
Was fette, & theron he swore anone
She gilty was, and in the meane whiles
An honde him smote on the nekke bone
That downe he fyl atones, as a stone
And borst his eyen braste out of his face
In syght of euery body in that place

A voice was herde, in generall audience
That sayd: Thou hast disclandred giltles
The doughter of holy chirche, in hir presence
Thus hast thou don, and yet I hold my pees
Of this maruelle, agast was al the prees
As dismayde folke, they stonden euerichone
For drede of wreche, saue Custance alone

Gret was ỳ drede, and eke the repentaunce
Of hem that hadden wrought suspection
Upon this sely innocent Custaunce
And for this miracle, in conclusion
And by Custaunces mediacion

The

The kyng, and many an other in that place
Conuerted was, thanked be goddes grace

This falſe knight was ſlain for his vntroth
By iudgement of Alla haſtely
And yet Cuſtaunce had of his deth gret roth
And after this, Jeſus of his mercy
Made Alla wedden full ſolempnely
This holy mayd, that is ſo bright & clene
And thus hath chriſt made Cuſtaūce a quene

But who was wofull, if I ſhulde not ly
Of this wedding: but Donegilde & no mo
The kynges mother, full of tirranny
Her thought her curſed hert braſt a two
She would not her ſonne had do ſo
Her thought a diſpite, that he ſhould take
So ſtraunge a creature vnto his make

We lyſt not of the chaffe ne of the ſtree
Make ſo longe a tale, as of the corne
What ſhulde I tell of the royalte
Of þ mariage, or which courſe goth before
Who blowerth in a trompe or in an horne
The fruite of euery tale is for to ſay
They eten and drinken, daunce and play

They gon to bedde, as it was ſkil & right
For though that wiues be ful holy thinges
They muſt take in pacience a nyght
Suche maner neceſſaryes, as ben plesinges
To folke that han wedded hem with ringes
And lay a litell her holyneſſe aſyde
As for the tyme, it may none other betyde

On her he gatte a man chylde anone
And to a biſhoppe, and to his conſtable eke
He toke his wife to kepe, whan he is gon
To Scotlond warde, his foomen for to ſeke
Now faire Cuſtaūce, þ is ſo humble & meke
So longe is gon with childe tyl that ſtil
She halte her chāber, abiding Chriſtes wil

The tyme is come, a man childe ſhe bare
Mauricius at fontſtone they hym calle
This conſtable doth forth come a meſſanger
And wrote to his king, that cleped was Alle
How that this bliſſull tydyng is befalle
And other tydynges nedefull for to ſay
He taketh the letter, & forth he goth his way

Thys meſſanger to done his auauntage
Unto the kynges mother rydeth ſwythe
And ſaluyeth her full fayre in hys language
Madame (quod he) ye may be glad & blythe
And thanketh god an hūdred thouſand ſithe
My lady quene hath childe, withouten dout
To ioye and bliſſe of al thys reygne about

Lo here the letters ſealed of thys thyng
That I mote bere, in all the haſte I may
Yeue ye woll ought vnto youre ſōne þ kyng
I am your ſeruaunt bothe nyght and day
Donegylde anſwerde, as at thys tyme nay
But here I wol al nyght thou take thy reſt
To morowe wol I ſay the what my leſte

This meſſāger dröke ſadly both & ale wine
And ſtollen were hys letters pryuely
Out of hys boxe, whyle he ſlept as a ſwine
And conterfeted was ful ſubtelly
Another letter, wrought ful ſynfully
Unto the kyng directe of thys mattere
Fro his conſtable, as ye ſhall after here

The letter ſpake, the quene delyuered was
Of ſo horrible a fendliſhe creature
That in the caſtell non ſo hardy was
That any whyle durſt therin endure
The mother was an elfe by auenture
Icome, by charmes or by ſorcerye
And euery wight hateth her companye

Wo was this king, whē he þ letter had ſeyn
But to no wight he tolde his ſorowe ſore
But with his owne hande he wrote ageyn
Welcome the ſonde of Chriſt for euermore
To me, that am newe lerned in hys lore
Lord, welcome be thy luſt and thy pleſaunce
My luſte I put all in thyne ordinaunce

Kepeth this childe, al be it foule or fayre
And eke my wyfe, vnto my home comming
Chriſte when him leſt, may ſend me an heyre
More agreable than thys, to my lykyng
This letter he ſealed, priuely wepyng
Whiche to the meſſanger was taken ſone
And forth he goeth there is no more to done

O meſſanger fulfilled of dronkenneſſe
Strōg is thy breth, thy lymmes faltren aye
And thou bewrayeſt al ſecretneſſe
Thy mynde is lorne, thou langliſt as a faye
Thy face is turned in a newe araye
There dronkenneſſe reygneth in any route
There nis no cōſayle hid withouten doute

O Donegild, I me have non englih digne
Unto thy malice, and thy tyranny
And therfore to the fende I the resigne
Let him endite of thy traytrye
Fye mannisshe fye: O nay by god I lye
Fye fendisshe spirit, for I dare well tell
Though thou here walke, thy spirit is in hel

This messanger cometh fro ꝑ king agayne
And at the kynges mothers house he lyght
And she was of this messanger full fayne
And pleased hym in all that euer she myght
He dronke, and well his girdel vnder pight
He slepeth, and he snorteth in hys gyse
All nyght, tyll the sonne gan aryse

Eke were hys letters sclosen euerychon
And counterfeted letters in thys wyse:
The kyng commaundeth his constable anon
Upon payne of hangyng on an hye iewyse
That he ne shulde suffren in no wyse
Custaunce, within hys realme for to abyde
Thre dayes, and a quarter of a tyde

But in the same shyppe, as he her fonde
Her and her yonge sonne, and al her gere
He shulde croude, and put fro the londe
And charge her, that she neuer eft come there
O Custaunce, well may thy goste haue fere
And slepyng in thy dreame, ben in penaunce
When Donegilde, cast all thys ordenaunce

This messanger on ꝑ morow when he woke
Unto the castell haste the next way
And to the constable he the letter toke
And when that he thys pitous letter sey
Full ofte he sayd (alas) and welawey
Lorde Christ (qd he) howe may this worlde
So full of sinne is many a creature endure

O mighty god, yf that it be thy wyll
Sin thou art rygheful iuge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffer innocence to spylle
And wicked folke to reigne in prosperite
Wo, good Custaunce (alas) so wo is me
That I mote be thy turmentour, or elis dey
On shames deth, there nys non other wey

Wepen both yonge and olde in that place
When that the kyng thys cursed letter sente
And Custaunce with a deedly pale face
The fourth day, toward her shyp she wente
But nathelesse, she taketh in good entente
The will of Christ, & knelyng in the strande
She sayd lorde, aye welcome be thy sonde

The that me kept fro that false blame
Whyles I was on the londe amonges you
He can me kepe fro harme, & eke fro shame
In the salt see, although I se not howe
As strong as euer he was, he is nowe
In hym trust I, and in hys mother dere
That is to me, my sayle and eke my stere

Her lytel chylde lay wepyng in her arme
And knelyng pitously, to hym she sayde
Peace lytell sonne, I wol do the none harme
With that her kercher of her hed she brayde
And ouer his lytell eyen she it layde
And in her arme, she lulleth it full faste
And into heauen her eyen vp she caste.

Moder (quod she) & mayde bright Mary
Sothe is, that through womans eggement
Mankynde was lore, & dampned aye to dye
For whiche thy childe was on crosse rent
Thy bitter eyen sawe all his turment
Than is there no comparison betwene
Thy wo, and any wo that man may sustene

Thou se thy child ystaine before thyn eyen
And yet nowe lyueth my lytell childe parfay
Nowe lady bright, to whom al wofull eyen
Thou glory of womanhed, thou fayre may
Thou hauen of refute, bright sterre of day
Rewe on my childe, of thy gentilesse
That rewest on euery rufull in distresse

O lytell childe (alas) what is thy gilte
That neuer wrongh tell synne, as yet parde
Why wol thyn harde father haue the spilte
O mercy: dere constable (quod she)
As let my lytle childe dwell here with the
And yf thou darst not sauen hym fro blame
So kysse hym ones, in hys fathers name

Therwith she loketh backwarde to ꝑ londe
And sayd: farewell husbande routhelesse
And vp she rist, & walketh downe ꝑ strande
Towarde the shippe her foloweth al ꝑ pres
& euer she prayeth her child to holde his pes
And taketh her leue, and with an holy entent
She blesseth her, & into the shyppe she went

Victrayled was the shippe, it is no drede
Habundantly, for her a full longe space

And

And other necessaries that shulde nede
She had inowe, hereid by goddes grace
For wind & wedder, almighty god purchace
And bring her home, I can no better say
But in the see, she dryueth forth her way

¶ Alla the king cometh home sone after this
Unto his castell, of whiche I tolde
And asketh where his wife & his childe is
The constable gan about his herte colde
And playnly al the maner hym tolde
As ye han herde, I can tell it no better
And shewed the king his seale and his letter

¶ And sayd: lorde as ye cõmanded me
Upon payne of deth, so haue I done certayn
Thys messanger tormented was, tyll he
Must beknowen, and tell plat and playn
Fro night to night, in what place he had layn
And thus by wise subtell enquiryng
Imagend was, by whome thys harme gan (spryng

¶ The hand was knowen, & the letter wrote
And all the venym of thys cursed dede
But in what wyse, certaynely I note
The effecte is this, that Alla out of drede
His mother slow, that may men plainly rede
For that the traytour was to her alegaunce
Thus endeth olde Donegilde, w mischaũce

¶ The sorow that this Alla night and day
Maketh for his childe, and for hys wife also
There is no tonge that it tel may
But nowe will I to Custaunce go
That fleteth in the see, in payne and wo
Fyue yere and more, as liked Christes sonde
Or that her shyppe approched vnto londe

¶ Under an hethen castell, at the laste
Of whiche the name in my text I not fynde
Custaunce and eke her childe the see vp caste
Almyghty god, that saueth al mankynde
Haue on Custaũce, & on her child some mynde
That fallen is in hethen hond efte sone
In payne to spyll, as I shall tell you sone

Down fro þ castel cometh ther many a wight
To gauren on this shippe, & on Custaunce
But shortly fro the castel on a nyght
The lordes stewarde god yeue hi mischaũce
A theef, that had renyed our creaunce
Came into the shippe alone, & sayd he shulde
Her lemman be, whether she woulde or nolde.

¶ Wod was the wretched woman tho bygon
Her child cried, & she cried pitously
But blyssful Mary halpe her anon
For with her strogthe, wel & mightyly
The theef fel ouer the borde, all sodaynly
And in the see he dreuched for vengeaunce
And thus hath Christ vnwemed kept custãce

¶ O foule lust of luxure, lo thyne ende
Not onely that thou fayntest mans mynde
But verely, thou wolt his body shende
The ende of thy werke, or of thy lustes blynd
Is cõplaining: how many one maye mẽ fynd
That not for werke somtime, but for thẽtent
To don this sinne, bene eyther slayne or shent

How may this weke woman haue þ strẽgth
Her to defende agaynst this renegate?
O Goliyas, vnmesurable of length
How might Dauid make the so mate?
So yonge, & of armure so desolate
Howe durst he loke on thy dredfull face?
Wel may men sene, it is but gods grace.

¶ Who yaue Judith courage or hardynesse
To sleen him Holofernes in his tent
And to delyuer out of wretchydnesse
The people of god? I say, for this entent
That right as god, spirite and bygore sente
To hem, and saued hem out of myschaunce
So sente he myght & bigore to Custaunce

Forth goth her ship thorow þ narow mouth
Of Subalter and septe, fletyng aye
Somtyme weste, & somtyme northe & south
And somtyme este, ful many a wery daye
Tyl Christes mother, yblessed be she aye
Hath shapen, through her endelesse goodnesse
To make an ende of all her heuynesse.

¶ Explicit secunda pars,
et sequitur pars
tertia.

NOwe lette vs stynte of Custaunce but a throw
And speake we of the Romayne Emperoure
That out of Surrey hath by letters knowe
The slaughter of christen folke, & dyshonour
Done to his doughter, by a false traytour
I meane the cursed wicked Soudanesse
That at the feest, let sleen both more & lesse

For

¶ For which this Emperour hath sent anon
His senatour, with royall ordinaunce
And other lordes, god wote many one
Us Surreyns to done hye vengeaunce
They vinen, slern, & vrigen hē to mischaūce
Ful many a day: but shortly this is the ende
Homward to Rome, they shapē hem to wēde

¶ This senatour repayreth with victorye
To Rome warde, sayling full royelly
And met the ship vrising, as sayth the storye
In whiche Custaunce, sat full pensifly
Nothyng knewe he what she was, ne why
She was in suche aray, ne she nolde sey
Of her estate, though she shoulde dey

¶ He bringeth her to Rome, and to his wife
He yaue her, and her yonge sonne also
And with the senatour she ladde her lyfe
Thus can our lady bring out of wo
Wofull Custaunce, and many an other mo
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place
In holy werkes euer, as was her grace.

¶ The senatours wyfe her aunte was
But for al that, she knewe her neuer ꝑ more
I will no lenger tary in this caas
But to king Alla, the whiche I spake of fore
That for his wife weyeth, and eyther fore
I wol retourne, and let I wyll Custaunce
Under the senatours gouernaunce.

¶ Kyng Alla, which ꝑ had his mother slayn
Upon a day fell in suche repentaunce
That ꝑ I shortly tellen al thal, s playn
To Rome he cometh, to receyue his penaūce
And putten hym in the popes ordinaunce
In hye & lowe, & Jesu Christ be sought
Forgeue his wicked werkes, ꝑ he wrought

The same anon through Rome toun is borne
Howe Alla kyng, shal come on pilgrimage
By herbegers that weuten hym before
For whiche the senatour, as was vsage
Rode hym agayne, and many of hys lynage
As well to shewn his hye magnificence
As to done any kynge reuerence

¶ Great chere doth thys noble senatour
To kyng Alla, and he to hym also
Euerych of hem doth other great honour
And so befell, that vn a day or two
Thys senatour is to kyng Alla go
To feste, and shortly ꝑ I shall not lye
Custaunces sonne went in hys compayne

Som me wold sayn, at ꝑ request of custaūce
This senatour had ladde this chylde to fest
I may not tellen euery circumstaunce
Be as be may, there was he at lest
But soth it is, right at his mothers best
Before Alla, duryng the meate space
The chylde stode, lokyng in the kinges face

This Alla sig, hath of this child gret wōder
And to the senatour he sayd anon
Whose is ꝑ fayre child, that stōdeth yonder
I not (quod he) by god and by sayne John
I mother he hath, but father hath he non
That I of wote, but shortly in a stounde
He tolde Alla, howe the chylde was founde

¶ But god wote (quod the senatour also)
So vertuous a lyuer in my lyfe
Ne sawe I neuer, as the, ne herde of mo
Of worldly woman, mayden, ne of wyfe
I dare wel say, the had leuer a knyfe
Thrugh her brest, than ben a womā wicke
There is no mā couth bring her to ꝑ pricke

¶ Howe was the childe as lyke Custaunce
As possible is any creature for to be
Thys Alla hath the face in remembraunce
Of Dame Custaunce, and eyeron muled he
Yeue that ꝑ childes mother were aught she
That is hys wyfe, and priuely he sight
And spedde hym fro the table, that he might

Parfay he thought, ꝑ fatome is in min herd
I ought deme of skylfull iudgement
That in the salte see my wyfe is derd
And afterwarde he made his argument
What wote I, ꝑ Christ hath hyder sent
My wyfe by see, as well as he her sent
To my contry, fro thens ꝑ she was went

¶ And after anon, hom with the senatour
Goth Alla, for to se this wonder chaunce
This senatour doth Alla great honour
And hastely he sent after Custaunce
But trusteth wel, her luste not to daunce
When she wiste wherfore was that sonde
Vnneth vpon her fete myght she stonde

When Alla sawe hys wyfe fayre be her gret
And wept, that it was routh to for see

For at the first loke he on her set
He knewe well verely, that it was she
And for sorowe, as dombe stant as a tre
So was her hert shet in distresse
Whan she remembred hys vnkyndnesse

Twyse she swouned in hys owne syght
He wepeth and hym excuseth pitously
Nowe god (qd he) and hys hallowes bright
So wysly on my soule haue mercy
That of your harme, as gyltiesse am I
As is Mauris my sonne, so lyke your face
Els the fende me fetche out of thys place.

Long was the sobbyng, & the bitter payne
Or that her wofull hert myght cese
Great was the pyte to here hem complayne
Though which playntes gā her wo encrese
I praye you all my laboure to release
I may not tell her wo, tyll to morowe
I am so werry to speake of her sorowe

But finally, whan the sothe is wyste
That Illa gyltiesse was of her wo
I trowe an hundred tymes ben they kyste
And suche a blesse is there betwixt hem two
That saue the ioye, that lasteth euermo
There is no lyke, that any creature
Hath seyn or shal, while the world may dure

Tho prayed she her husbonde mekely
In reuersyng of her pitous payne
That he wolde pray her father specially
That of his maiestie he wolde enclyne
To vouchesafe some day with hym to dyne
She prayed hym eke, he shulde by no way
Vnto her father no worde of her to say

Some mē wold say, ỹ the child Maurice
Doth this message vntyll thys Emperour
But as I gesse, Illa was not so nyce
To hym that was of so soueraygne honour
As he that is of christen folke the flour
Sent any chylde, but it is bette to deme
He went hym selfe, and so it maye wel seme

Thys Emperour graunted gentelly
To come to dyner, as he him besought
That all was redy he loked besyly
Vpō this childe, & on his doughter thought
Illa goeth to hys ynne, and as hē him ought
Arrayed for this feest in euery wyse
As ferforth as hys connyng may suffice

The morowe came, & Illa gan him dresse
And eke his wife, the Emperour for to mete
And forth they ryde in ioye and in gladnesse
And whan she sawe her father in the strete
She light downe and falleth hym to fete
Father (qd she) your yonge childe Custaunce
Is nowe fal clene out of your remēbraunce

I am your doughter Custaunce (quod she)
That whylom ye han sent in to Surrye
It am I father, that in the salte see
Was put alone, and dampned for to dye
Nowe good father I you mercy crye
Sende me no more in to hethennesse
But thanken my lorde here of hys kyndnesse

Who can the pitous ioye tellen all
Betwixt hem three, sin they ben thus ymette
But of my tale make an ende I shall
The day goeth faste, I wol no lenger lette
Thys glad folke to dynner ben sette
In ioye and blisse, at meate I let hem dwell
A thousande folde well more than I can tell

Thys childe Maurice was sithen emperour
Made by the Pope, and lyued christenly
To Christes churche he did great honour
But I lette all thys storye passen by
Of Custaunce is my tale specially
In olde Romayn iestes men maye fynde
Maurys lyfe, I beare it not in mynde

This kyng Illa, when hys time sey
With this Custaūce, his holy wyfe so swete
To Englonde ben they come the right wey
Where as they liue in ioye and in quiete
But lytel whyle it lasteth I you hete
Ioy of this worlde, for tyme wol not abyde
Fro day to nyght, it chaungeth as the tyde

Who lyued euer in suche delyte a day
That he ne meued either in conscience
Or yre, or talent of some kyn affray
Enuye or pryde, or passion, or offence
I ne say, but for this ende, and this sentence
That lytell whyle in ioye or in plesaunce
Lasteth the blisse of Illa with Custaunce

For deth, ỹ taketh of hye & lowe his rente
When passed was a yere, euyn as I gesse
Out of thys worlde kyng Illa hente
For whom Custaūce hath full gret heuinesse
Nowe let vs prayen god his soule blesse

And

And vnto Canterbury, finally to ryde
Towarde the towne of Rome gan they bothe wayde

¶ To Rome is come this holy creature
And fyndeth her father hole and sounde
Howe is she shaped all her auenture
And when that she her father hath yfounde
Downe on her knees she goeth to grounde
Weping for tendernesse in hert blythe
She herieth god, an hundred thousand sythe

¶ In vertue and holy almesdede
They liuen all, and neuer a sonder wende
Till deth departen hem, this life they lede
And fareth nowe well, my tale is at an ende
Now Jesu Christ, ỹ of his might may sende
Joy after wo, gouerne vs in hys grace
And kepe vs all, that ben in thys place.

¶ Thus endeth the man of lawes tale, and here foloweth the Squiers prologue.

OUr hoste on his stiropes stode anon
And sayd: good men herkeneth euerichon
Thys was a thrifty tale for the nones
Sir parisshe preest (qd he) for goddes bones
Telle vs a tale, as was thy forwarde yore
I see well that ye lerned men in lore
Can muche good, by goddes dignite
The parson him answerde, benedicite
What eyleth the man, so synfully to swere
¶ Our hoste answerd, O Jenkin, be ye there
Now good men (qd our host) herkeneth to me
I smell a loller in the wynde (quod he)
Abideth for goddes digne passion
For we shall haue a predicacion
This loller here, wol preechen vs somwhat.
¶ Nay by my fathers soule, that shal he nat
Sayd the Squier, here shall he nat preche
Here shal he no gospel glose ne teche
We leueth al in the great god (quod he
He wolde sowen some difficulte
Or synge cockell in our clene corne
And therfore hoste, I warne the beforne
My holy body, shall a tale tell
And I shal syngen you so mery a bell
That I shall waken all thys companye
But it shall not ben of philosophye
Ne phislike, ne termes queynte of lawe
There is but lytell latten in my mawe.

There endeth the Squiers prologe, and hereafter foloweth his tale.

AT Sarra, in the londe of Tartary
There dwelte a kynge that warred Russy
Thrugh whiche there died many a douzty mã
This noble kynge was called Cambuscan
Whiche in his tyme was of so great renoun
That there nas no where, in no regyon
So excellent a lorde in all thyng
Him lacked nought, that longed to a kyng
As of the secte of whiche he was borne
He kept his lay to whiche he was sworne
And therto he was hardy, wyse, and ryche
And pyteous and iuste alway yliche
Trewe of his word, benigne and honorable
Of his corage, as any centre stable
Yonge, freshe, a stronge, in armes desyrous
As any bacheler of al his hous
A fayre person he was, and fortunate
And kept alwaye so royall astate
That there nas no where such another man.
This noble kyng, this tartre, this Cãbuscan
Had two sonnes by Elthera his wyfe
Of whiche the eldest hyght Algarsyfe
That other was cleped Camballo.
¶ A doughter had this worthy kyng also
That yongest was, and hight Canace
But for to tell you all her beaute

It lyche not in my tonge, ne in my conyng
I dare not undertake so hie a thyng
Myn Engly she she is unsufficient
It must ben a rethor excellent
That couth his colours, longing for the arte
If he shuld discrive here every parte
I am none suche, I mote speke as I can
And so byfel, that this Cambuscan
Hath twenty wynter borne his diademe
As he was wont, fro yere to yere I deme
He let the feest of his natiuite
Done crien, throughout Sarra his cyte
The last ydus of Marche, after the yere.
Phebus the sonne, ful ioly was and clere
For he was nye his exaltacion
In Martes face, and in his mancion
In Aryes, the colloryke, the hote tyme
Ful lusty was the wether and bemygne
For which the foules, ayenst the sunne shene
What for the season, and the yonge grene
Ful sonde songe her affections
Hem semed han getten hem protections
Ayen the swerde of wynter kene and colde.
¶ This Cãbuscan, of which I haue you told
In royall vestementes, sytte on his deys
With diademe, ful hye in his paleys
And helde his feest so royal and so riche
That in this worlde nas there non it lyche
Of which, if I shall tell of all the array
Than wold it occuppe a sõmers day
And eke it nedeth not to deuyse
At every course, the ordre of her seruice
I wol not tell of her straunge sewes
Ne of her swannes, ne of her heronsewes
Eke in that londe, as tellen knightes olde
Ther is some meate, that is ful daynty holde
That in this londe men recche of it but small
Ther is no man that may reporten all.
I wyl not tarye you, for it is prime
And for it is no reason, but losse of tyme
Unto my first purpose I woll haue recourse.
¶ And so byfel that after the thirde course
While that this king sytte thus in his noblay
Herkenyng his minstralles her thinges play
Byfore him at his borde deliciously
In at the halle dore al sodaynly
There came a knyght on a stede of brasse
And in his honde a brode mirrour of glasse
Upon his thombe he had of golde a ryng
And by his syde a naked swerde hongyng
And up he rideth to the hie borde
In all the halle ne was there spoke a worde
For marueile of the knight, him to beholde
Ful besyly they waryen yonge and olde.
¶ This straunge knight that come thus sodenly
Armed saue his heed, ful royally
Salued kyng and queene, and lordes all
By ordre, as they sytten in the hall
With so hie reuerence and obeysaunce
As wel in speche as in countenaunce
That Gawayne with his olde curtesye
Though he come ayen out of fayrye
Ne couthe him not amende of no worde
And after this, before the hye borde
He with a manly voyce said his message
After the forme used in his langage
Without vice of syllable or of letter
And for his tale shulde seme the better
Accordant to his wordes was his chere
As techeth arte of speche hem that it lere
Al be that I can not sowne his style
Ne I ne can not clymben so hye a style
Yet say I thus as to my comen entent
Thus muche amõunteth all that euer he ment
If it so be, that I haue it in my mynde.
He sayde: The kyng of Araby and of ynde
My liege lorde, on this solempne day
Saluteth you, as he best can and may
And sendeth you in honour of your feest
By me that am redy at your heest
This stede of brasse that easyly and well
Can in the space of a day naturell
This is to say, in four and twenty houres
Where so ye lyst, in drought or in shoures
Beren your body in to every place
Into whiche your hert willeth to pace
Without wem of you, through foul or faire
Or if ye lyst to fleen in the eyre
As doth an Egle, whan him lyst to sore
This same stede shal beare you euermore
Without harme, tyl ye ben there you lest
Though that ye slepen on his backe and rest
And turne agayn with the writhyng of a pyn
He that it wrought coude ful many a gyn
He wayted full many a constellation
Or he had done this operacion
And knew ful many a seale & many a bonde
This mirrour eke that I haue in myn honde
Hath suche a might, that men may in it se
Whan there shal fallen any aduerssite
Unto your reigne, or to your selfe also
And openly se, who is your frende and foe
And ouer al this, if any lady bright
Hath set her herte on any manere wight
If he be false, she shal the treason se
His newe loue, and al his subtelte

So openly, that there shal nothyng hyde
Wherfore agayne this iusty somer tyde
This myrrour & this ring, that ye may se
He hath sent to my lady Canace
Your excellent doughter that is here.
¶ The vertue of this ryng, if ye wol here
Is this, that if she lyst it for to were
Upon her thombe, or in her purse it bere
There is no foule, that fleeth vnder heuen
That she ne shal vnderstonde his steuen
And knowe his meanyng openlye and playne
And answere him in his langage agayne
And every grasse that groweth vpon rote
She shal wel know, & whom it wol do bote
Al be his woundes neuer so depe and wyde.
¶ This naked swerde, þ hangeth by my syde
Such vertue hath, þ what man so ye smyte
Throughout his armure it wol kerue & byte
Were it as thicke as a braunched oke
And what man that is wounded vp the stroke
Shall neuer be hole, tyl that you list of grace
To stroken him with þ platte in thylke place
There he is hurt, this is as muche to sayne
Ye mote with the platte swerde agayne
Stroken him in the wounde, & it wol close
This is very sothe withouten glose
It fayleth not, whiles it is in your holde.
& whã thys knight hath thus his tale tolde
He rideth out of the halle, & down he lyght
His stede, which that stode as stonne bright
Stante in the courte styl as any stone
The knight is in to chambre ladde anone
He is vnarmed, and to the meate yfette
And al that harneys byfore him fette
This is to sain, the swerd & eke the myrrour
All borne was into the hye tour
With certayne officers ordeyned therfore
And to Canace the ryng is bore
Solempnely, there she sate at the table
But sikerly without any fable
The horse of brasse, that may not be remeued
It stant, as it were to the ground ygleued
There may no man out of the place it dryue
For none engyne, or wyndlas, or polyue
And cause why, for they can not the crafte
And therfore in the place they han it lafte
Tyl þ the knight hath taught hem þ manere
To voyden him, as ye shall after here.
¶ Great was þ prees, that swarmed to & fro
To gauren on the horse, that stondeth so
For it so hye was, & so brode and longe
And wel proporcioned for to ben stronge
Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye
Therwith so horsly, and so quicke of eye
As it a gentle courser of Poyle were
For certes, fro his tayle to his ere
Nature ne art ne couthe him not amende
In no degre, as al the people wende
But euermore her most wonder was
Howe that he couth gon, and was of bras
It was of fayrie, as the people semed
Diuers folke diuersly they demed
As many heedes, as many wittes there ben
They mutmure, as doth a swarme of bees
And maden skyles after her fantesyes
Rehersyng of the olde poetryes
And sayden it was lyke the Pegase
The horse that had wynges for to flee
Or elis it was the grekes horse Synon
That brought Troye to destruccion
As men in thise olde bokes rede.
Myn here (qd one) is euermore in drede
I trowe some men of armes ben therin
That shapen hem this cyte for to wyn
It were right good, þ such thinges were knowe
Or other rowned to his felawe lowe
And sayd he lyed, for it is rather lyke
An apparence made by some magyke
As iogglours playen at these feestes grete
Of sondry thoughtes, thus they iangle & trete
As lewde people demeth comenly
Of thynges that ben made more subtelly
Than they can in her lewdenesse comprehende
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And some of hem wondren on the myrrour
That borne was vp to the mayster tour
How men myght in it suche thinges set.
And other answerd, certes it might wel be
Naturally by compositions
Of angels and of fyre reflections
And sayden, in Rome was suche on
They spoken of Alocen and Vitellion
And Aristote, that writeth in her lyues
Of queynte myrrours, and of prospectiues
As knowen they that han her bokes herde.
And other folke han wondred on þ swerde
That wolde perce throughe euery thyng
And fel in speche of Telophus the king
And of Achilles for his queynte spere
For he couthe with it heale and dere
Right in such wise as mẽ may with the swerd
Of which right now ye haue your selue herd
They spoken of sondry hardyng of metal
And spoken of medycyns eke withal
And how, and whan it shulde hardned be
Which is vnknowe algate to me.

¶ The

¶Who ſpeke they of Canaces rynge
And ſayden al, that ſuche a wonder thyng
Of craft of rynges herde they never non
Save that Moſes, and kyng Salomon
Had a name of conyng of ſuche arte.
Thus ſaien the people, and dravven hem aparte
But nathelesſe, ſome ſayden that it was
Wonder to maken of ferne aſhen, glas
And yet is glas not lyke aſhen of ferne
But for they han knowen it ſo ferne
Therfore they ceſen her lãgyng & her wõder
As for wondrẽ ſome on cauſe of thunder
On ebbe & flud, on goſſomer, and on myſte
And on all thing, til the cauſe is wyſte.
Thus langien they, and demen and deuyſe
Tyll that the kynge gan fro his boorde ariſe.
¶Phebus hath left the angle meridionall
And yet aſcendyng was the beeſt royall
The gentil lyon with his Adrian
When that this Tartre kynge Cambuſcan
Roſe from his bord, there as he ſate full hye
Before him goth the loude minſtralcye
Tyll he came to his chambre of parementes
There as they ſownen dyuers inſtrumentes
That is lyke an heuen for to here.
Now dauncen lufty Venus children dere
For in the ſyke her lady ſat full hye
And lokerth on hem with a frendly eye.
¶This noble king is ſet vpon his trone
This ſtraunge knight is ſet to him ful ſone
And in the daunce he goeth with Canace
Here is the reuel and the iolyte
That is not abte a dull man to deuyſe
He muſte han knowe love and her ſeruiſe
And ben a freſſhyche man, as freſhe as May
That ſhuld you deuiſe ſuche array.
¶Who coude tellen you ẏ forme of daunces
So dyuerſe, and ſo freſhe countenances
Suche ſubtyl lokynges, and dyſſymulynges
For drede of ialouſe mens aperceyuynges
No man but Lancelot, and he is deed
Therfore I paſſe ouer al this luſtyhed
I ſay no more, but in this iolyneſſe
I lete hem, tyl men to ſupper dreſſe.
¶The ſtewarde bydderh ſpices for to hye
And eke the wine, in all this melodye
The biſhers and the ſquyers ben ygone
The ſpyces and the wine is comen anone
They eten & dröken, & whan this had an ende
Unto the temple, as reaſon was, they wende
The ſeruice is done, they ſoupen all by day
What nedeth it to reherſen her array.
Eche man wot wel, that at a kynges feſt
Is plenty, to the moſt and to the leeſt
And deyntes mo, than ben in my knowing
And after ſupper goeth this noble kyng
To ſen this horſe of braſſe, with al his route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute
Such wõdring ther was on this hors of brag
That ſithen the great ſiege of Troye was
There as men wondred on an horſe alſo
Ne was there ſuch a wondryng, as was tho
But fynally, the kyng aſketh the knight
The vertue of this horſe and the myght
And praid him to tellen of his gouernaũce.
The horſe anon gan to tryppe and daunce
When ẏ this knight layde hond on his rayne
And ſaid, ſir there is no more to ſayne
But when you lyſte to riden any where
Ye mote tryll a pyn, ſtante in his ere
Which I ſhal tel you betwene vs two
Ye mote nempne him to what place alſo
Or to what countre you lyſt to ride
And when ye come there you lyſt abyde
Byd him diſcende, and tryll another pyn
For therin lyeth the effecte of all the gyn
And he wol downe diſcende, & don your wyll
And in that place he wol abyde ſtyll
Though al ẏ world had the cõtrary ſworne
He ſhal not thens be pthrowe ne yborne
Or if you lyſt byd him thens gon
Tryl this pyn, and he wol baniſſhe anon
Out of the ſyght of euery maner wyght
And come ayen, be it day or nyght
When that you lyſt to clepen him agayne
In ſuch a gyſe, as I ſhal to you ſaine
Betwyxt you and me, and that ful ſone
Ryde whã you lyſt ther nys no more to done
Enfourmed when ẏ king was of ẏ knyght
And hath conceyued in his wit aryght
The maner and the forme of al this thing
Ful glad and ful blyth, the noble kyng
Repayreth to his reuel, as byfore
The bridel is in the toure yborne
And kept amonge his iewels leſe and dere
The horſe vaniſhed, I not in what maner
Out of her ſyght, ye get no more of me
But thus I lete in luſte and iolyte
This Cambyſcan, his lordes feſtyng
Tyl well nye the day began to ſpryng.

¶Explicit prima pars,
et ſequitur pars
ſecunda.

The nozres of dyuersyon, the
Gan on hem wynke, and bad
hem take kepe
That myrthe, drynke, and la-
bour wol haue reste
And with a gaspyng mouth hem al he keste
And said, it was tyme to lye adoun
For blod was in his dominacioun
Therfor eth blod, natures frende (quod he)
They thanken him gasping, by two by thre
And euery wight gan drawen him to his rest
As slepe hem bade, they toke it for the best.
Her dremes shul not now ben told for me
Ful were her beedes of fumosite
That causeth dremes, of which there is no
They slepen, til it was prime large (charge
The most part, but it were Canace
She was ful mesurable, as women be
For of her father had she take her leue
To gon to rest, sone a fter it was eue
Her lyst not appalled for to be
Nor on the morowe, vnfestlyche for to se
And slept her first slepe, and awoke
For suche a ioy she in her hert toke
Both of her queynt ringe, & of her myrrour
That twenty tymes she chaūged her colour
And in her slepe, right for impressyon
Of her myrrour, she had a visyon
Wherfore, or the sonne vp gan glyde
She cleped her maistresses her beside
And said, her lust for to aryse.
¶ These olde women, that ben gladly wyse
As is her maistres, answered her anon
And said; madame, whider woll ye goon
Thus erly, for folke ben all in rest.
¶ I woll (quod she aryse) for me lyste
No lenger for to slepe, but walken aboute.
Her maistresse cleped women a great route
And vp they rise, wel ten or twelue
Vp ryseth fresshe Canace her selue
As ioly and bright, as the ponge sonne
That in the Ram is four degrees vp ronne
No hyght was he, whan she redy was
And forthe she walketh an easye pas
Arrayed after the lusty season sote
Lightly for to playen, & to walken on fote
Nought but fyue or sixe of her meyne
And in a trenche, fer in the parke gothe she.
¶ The vapour, which ꝑ fro the erthe glode
Waketh the sonne to seme ruddy and brode
But nathelesse, it was so fayre a syght
That it made al her hertes for to lyght
What for the reason, and for the morowning
And for the fowles that she herde syng
For right anon, she wyste what they ment
Right by her songe, and knewe al her entent.
¶ The knot why, that euery tale is told
If it be taried tyl lust be colde
Of hem that han it herkened after yore
The sauour passeth, euer lenger the more
For fulsomnes of prolixite
And by the same reason thynketh me
I shulde vnto the same knot condescende
And make of her walkyng sone an ende.
¶ Amydde a tre, for dre as white as chalke
As Canace was playeng in her walke
There sat a falcon ouer her heed ful hye
That with a pitous voyce gan to crye
That all the wodde resowned of her cry
And bearen had her self so pitously
With both her winges, til the reed blode
Ran endlonge the tre, there as she stode
And euer in one, she cried and shright
And with her becke, her self so she pyght
That there nas Tygre, ne cruel beste
That dwelleth in wodde, eyther in forreste
That nolde han wepe, if ꝑ they wepe coude
For sorow of her, she shright alway so loude
For there was neuer yet man on lyue
If that he couthe a faucon wel discryue
That herde of such another of fayrenesse
As wel of plumage, as of gentylnesse
Of shappe, of all that myght herkened be
A faucon peregryn than semed she
Of frende londe, & euermore as she stoode
She swouned now & now, for lacke of bloode
Til weiny is she fall fro the tree.
¶ This fayre kynges doughter, this Canace
That on her fynger bare the queynte ryng
Thrugh which she vnderstode wel euery thig
That any foule may in his leden sayne
And coude answere him in his leden agayne
Hath vnderstande, what this faucon seyde
And weiny for routhe almost she deyde
And to the tree she gothe ful haskely
And on this faucon loketh ful pitously
And helde her lappe abrode, for wel she wiste
The faucon must fallen from the twyste
Whā ꝑ she swouned next, for lacke of blode
A longe while to wayten there she stoode
Til at the last she spake in this manere
Vnto the hauke, as ye shalen after here.
¶ What is the cause, if it be for to tell
That ye ben in this furyal payne of helle
Quod Canace, vnto this hauke aboue

Is this for sorowe of death, or losse of loue
For as I trowe, these ben causes two
That causen most a gentyl hert wo
Of other harme it nedeth not to speke
For ye vpon your selfe you wreke
Which proueth wel, that either ire or drede
Mote ben encheson of your cruel dede
Syn that I se none other wyght you chace
For the loue of god, so doth your selfe grace
Or what may be your helpe, for well or ill
Ne sawe I neuer er now, no byde ne hill
That farde with him selue so pytously
I pr'ye me with your sorow verily
I haue of you so great compassioun
For goddes loue come fro the tre adown
And as I am a kynges doughter trewe
If that I verely the causes knewe
Of your disease, if it lay in my myght
I wolde amende it, certes or it be nyght
As wisely helpe me great god of kynde
And herbes shall I right ynowe finde
To hele with your hurtes hastely.
Tho shright this faucon yet more pitously
Than euer she dyd, & fell to grounde anone
And lyeth a swoune dead as is a stone
Till Canace hath in her lappe take
Vnto the tyme she gan of swoune awake
And after that she of swoune gan abreyde
Right in her haukes leden thus she seyde
That pite renneth soone in gentyl hert
(Feling his semilitude in paynes smert)
Is proued al day, as men may se
As wel by werke as by authorite
For gentil hert kepeth gentylnesse
I se wel, that ye haue of my distresse
Compassion, my faire Canace
Of very womanly benygnite
That nature in your principles hath sette
But for non hope for to fare the bette
But for to obey vnto your hert free
And for to make other beware by me
As by the whelpe chastised is the Lion
Right for that cause, & for that conclusion
While that I haue a leyser and a space
Myne harme I wol confessen or I pace
And euer while that one her sorowe tolde
That other wepte, as she to water wolde
Till that the Faucon badde her to be stylle
And with a sike, thus she sayd her tyll.
I There I was bredde, alas that sike day
And fostred in a roche of marble gray
So tenderly, that nothing eyleth me
I ne, will what was aduersite
Til I coude fly, ful hie vnder the skye
There dwelt a Tercelet me fast by
That semed wel of all gentilnesse
All were he ful of trayson and of falsnesse
It was so wrapped vnder humble chere
And vnder hewe of trouth, & in suche manere
Vnder plesaunce, and vnder busy payn
That no wight coud haue wende he coud fayn
So depe in grayne he died his colours
Right as a serpent hideth him vnder flours
Till he may se his time for to bite
Right so, this god of loues ipocrite
Doth so his serymones and obeysaunce
With his dissimulyng, & faire assemblaunce
That for to wynne vnto gentilnesse of loue
As in a tombe is all the faire aboue
And vnder the colys, suche as ye wote
Suche was this ipocrite colde and hote
And in this wise he serued his entent
That saue ye fende, non wyst what he ment
Til he so long had weped and complayned
And many a yere his seruyce to me yfayned
Til that myn hert, to pitous and to nyce
All innocent of his cruel malyce
For ferde of his deth, as thought me
Vpon his othes and his surete
Graunted him loue, vpon this condition
That euermore myne honour and my renoun
Were saued, both preuy and apert
This is to say, that after his desert
I yaue him al min hert and al my thought
God wote, and in other wise nought
And toke his hert in chaunge of myn for aye
But sothe is said, gone sithen many a day
A trewe wight and a theke thynketh not one
And whan he sawe the thing so fer igone
That I graunted him fully my loue
In suche a gise, as I haue said aboue
And yeuen him my true herte as free
As he swore he yaf his hert to me
Anon this tigre, ful of doublenesse
Fyl on his knees with so deuout humblesse
With hye reuerence, and eke by his chere
So lyke a gentyl louer, as of manere
So rauyshed, as it semed for ioye
That neuer Troylus, ne Paris of Troy
Jason certes, ne non other man
Syn Lameth was, that alderfirst began
To louen two, as writen folke before
Ne neuer sithen Adam was borne
Ne couthe man by twenty thousande parte
Counterfete the sophymes of his arte
Ne were worthy to vnbocle his galoche

Ther doublenesse or fayntyng shuld approche
Ne so coude thanke a wight, as he dyd me
His maner was an heuen for to se
Til any woman, were she neuer so wyse
So paynteth he his chere poynt deuyse
As wel his wordes, as his countenaunce
And I so loued him for his obeysaunce
And for the trouthe that I demed in his hert
That if so were, that any thyng him smert
Al were it neuer so lyte, and I it wyst
Me thought I felt deth at my hert twist
And shortly, so ferforth this thing went
That my wyll was his wylles instrument
That is to saye, my wyl obeyed his wyll
In all thing, as ferre as reason fyll
Kepyng the boundes of my worship euer
Ne neuer had I thyng so lefe ne so leuer
As him god wote, ne neuer shal no mo
This last lenger then a yere or two
That I supposed of him nothing but good.
But finally, thus at the last it stode
That fortune wold that he must twyn
Out of that place, which that I was in
Where me was wo, it is no question
I can not make of it discryption
For o thyng dare I tell boldely
I knowe what the payne of deth is therby
Such harm I felte, that he ne myght beleue
So on a day of me he toke his leue
So sorowfully eke, that I wende verely
That he had felte as moche harm as I
For whā that I herd him speke, and saw his hewe
But natheles, I thought he was so trewe
And eke that he repaire shulde againe
Within a lytell while sothe to sayne
And reason wold eke, that he must go
For his honour, as ofte happeth so
That I made vertue of necessitie
And toke it well, sith he it must nedes be
As I best might, I bidde fro him my sorowe
And toke him by ye hond, Sⁿ. John to borowe
And said thus: lo I am yours all
Redy to suche as I haue ben to you and shall
What he answerd, it nedeth not reherce
Who can sayn bet than he, who can do werse
Whāne he hath al wel ysayd, than hath he done
Therfore behoueth him a longe spone
That shal eten with a fende, thus herde I say
So at the last he mote forth his way
And forth he fleeth til he come there him lest
Nor han it come him to purpose for to rest
I trowe he had thilke text in mynde
That al thing repaireth to his kynde
Gladeth hem kynde, thus sayn men as I gesse
Men louen of kinde newfangelnesse
As briddes don, that men in cages fede
For though ye night & day take of hem hede
And strawe her cage faire and softe as silke
And gyue hem sugre, hony, bred and mylke
Yet right anon as his doze is vp
He with his fete wold spoyne adown his cup
And to the wood he wold, and wormes eate
So newfangle ben they of her meate
And louen noueltes of proper kynde
No gentylnesse of blode may hem bynde
So ferde this Tercelet, alas the day
Tho he were gentil borne, fresshe and gay
And goodly for to se, and humble and free
He sawe vpon a tyme a kyte flee
And sodainly he loued this kyte so
That al his loue is clene fro me go
And hath his trouth falsed in this wise
Thus hath the kyte my loue in her seruice
And I am lorne without remedy.
And with ye worde this faucon gan to cry
And swouned ofte in Canaces barme
Gret was the sorowe for ye haukes harme
That Canace, and al her women made
They wyst how they might her faucon glade
But Canace home bereth here in her lappe
And softely in plaisters gan her wrappe
There as she wt her becke had hurt her selue
Nowe cannot Canace but herbes delue
Out of the grounde and make salues newe
Of herbes precious and fyne of hewe
To helen with the hauke fro day to night
She dothe her besynesse, and all her myght
And by her beddes hed she made a newe
And couered it with delicates diuerse
In signe of trouthe, that is in women sene
And al without ye Mewe is paynted grene
In which were paynted all these false foules
As ben these ryuers, tercelettes, and owles
Right for dispyte were paynted hem beside
Pyes on hem for to cry and chyde.
This seue I Canace her hauke kepynge
I wol no more as now speke of her tynge
Til it come eft to purpos for to sayn
How that this faucon gate her loue agayn
Repentaunt, as the storye telleth vs
By mediation of Camballus
The kynges sonne, of whiche I of tolde
But hensforth he I wol my proces holde
To speken of auentures, and of batayls
That yet was neuer herd of so gret marueils.
First wol I tel you of Cambuscan,

That

That in his tyme many a cite wan
Nowe that he wan Thedoza to hys wyfe
And after woll I speake of Algarsife
For whom full oft in great perill he was
Ne had he ben holpen by the hoꝛse of bꝛas
And after woll I speake of Cambello
That fought in lystes with the bꝛethꝛen two
For Canace, er that he might her wyn
And there I left, I woll agayn begyn.

¶ Explicit secunda pars,

Appollo whirleth vp hys chare so hye
Tyll that the god Mercurius house he slye.

¶ There can be founde no moꝛe of thys
foꝛesayd tale, whiche hathe ben
sought in diuers places.

¶ Here foloweth the woꝛdes of the Mar-
chaunte to the Squier, and the
woꝛdes of the Hoste to the
Marchaunte.

In fayth Squier, thou haste the wel squit
And gentrely, I prayse well thy wit
Qd the Marchant, consideꝛing thyne youth
So feelingly thou spekest, I the alouth
Is to my dome, there is non that is here
Of eloquence, that shalde thy pere
Yf thou line, god giue ꝧ right good chaũce
And in vertue sende the perseueraunce
For of thy spekyng I haue great deynte
I haue a sonne, and by the Trinite
I had leuer than twẽty pouñdes woꝛth loude
(Though it nowe were fallen in my honde)
He were a man of suche discrecion
As that ye ben: fye on possession
But yf a man be vertuous with all
I haue my sonne snybbed, and yet shall
For he to vertue listeth nat to entende
But for to play at dyse, and to spende
And lese all that he hathe, is hys vsage
And he had leuer talke with a page
Than to cõmen with any gentyll wyght
Where he might leꝛne gentelnesse aryght
Strawe for your gẽtylnesse (qd our hoste)
What Marchant, pardy wel thou woste
That eche of you moꝛe tellen at the lest
A tale oꝛ two, oꝛ breken your behest
That know I well (qd the marchãt) certain
I pray you haue me nat in disdain
Though I to this mã speke a woꝛd oꝛ two

¶ Tell on thy tale withouten woꝛdes mo
Gladly sir hoste (qaod he) I woll obey
Unto your will, now herkeneth what I sey
I wol you not contrary in no wyse
As farre as my wyttes may suffice
I pray to god that it may plesen you
Than wote I well, it is good ynow.

¶ Thus endeth the woꝛdes of the hoste and
the marchant, and here foloweth the
Marchauntes ꝓlogue.

WEpynge and waylyng, care
and other soꝛowe
I haue ynowe, bothe euyn
and eke a moꝛowe
Quod the Marchant, and so
haue other mo
That wedded be, I trowe that it be so
For well I wote it fareth so by me
I haue a wyfe, the woꝛst that maye be
For though the fende coupled to her were
She wold hi ouermatch I dare well swere
What shoulde I reherse in speciall
Her high malice, she is a shꝛewe at all
There is a longe and a large difference
Betwixte Griseldes great patience
And of my wyfe the passyng cruelte
Were I vnbounde, also mote I the
I wouldeneuer efte come in the snare
We wedded men lyue in soꝛowe and care
Assay who so woll, and he shall fynde
That I say soth, by sayne Thomas of Inde
As foꝛ the moꝛe parte, I say not all
God shelde that it shoulde so befall
Ah good sir hoste, I haue wedded be
These monethes two, and moꝛe not parde
And yet I trowe he that all hys lyfe
Hath wedded be, though men hym ryfe
Into the herte, ne couthe in no manere
Tell so muche soꝛowe, as I nowe here
Conde tell, of my wyues cursednesse
Nowe qd our hoste marchãt so god ꝧ blesse
Syn ye ben so muche knowe of that arte
Ful hertely I pray you tell vs parte
Gladly quod he, but of myn owne soꝛe
For soꝛy hert I tell may no moꝛe.

¶ Here endeth the Marchauntes
ꝓlogue, and here foloweth
hys tale.

Whilom there was dwel-
lyng in Lumbardy
A worthy knyght, that
borne was at pauy
In whiche he lyued in
grete prosperite
And sixty yere a wiuer
man was he
And folowed aye hys bodely delyte
On women, there as was his appetyte
As don these foles that ben seculeres
And when that he was paste sixty yeres
Where it for holynesse or dotage
I can nat sayn, but suche a great corage
Had thys knyght to ben a wedded man
That day and nyght he doth all that he can
To espy, where that he wedded might be
Prayeng our lorde to graunten him that he
Myghten ones knowen of that blisful lyfe
That betwixt an husbonde and hys wyfe
And for to lyuen vnder that holy bonde
With which god first man & woman bonde
Non other lyfe (sayd he) is worthe a bean
For wedlocke is so easy and so clean
That in this worlde it is a paradise
Thus sayth this olde knight that is so wise.
And certaynly, as sothe as god is kyng
To take a wyfe, it is a glorious thyng
And namely when a man is olde and hore
Than is a wyfe the fruite of hys tresore
Than shuld he take a yonge wife and a faire
On which he might engendren him an heire
And lede hys lyfe in ioy and in solace
Where as these bachelers singen alas
When that they fynden any aduersite
In loue, whiche nys but chyldes vanyte
And truely it sytte well to be so
That bacheliers han ofte payne and wo
On brotell grounde they bylden brotelnesse
They find frenite, whan they wene sekernesse
They lyue but as byrdes or beestes
In liberty, and vnder-seye arestes
There as a wedded man in hys estate
Lyueth a lyfe blessfully and ordinate
Vnder the yoke of mariage ybounde
Wel may his herte in ioye & blysse habounde
For who can be so burome as a wyfe
Who is so trewe and eke so tendyfe
To kepe hym sicke and hole, as is his make
For wel no wo she nyll hym not forsake
She nys not wery hym to loue and serue
Though that he lye bedrid tyll he sterue
And yet some clerkes sayn, that it is nat so
Of whiche Theophrast is one of tho
What force though Theophrast lyst to lye
Ne take no wyfe (qd he) for husbondrye
As for to spare in housholde thy despence
A trewe seruaunt doeth more diligence
Thy good to kepe, than thyn owne wyfe
For she wol clayme halfe parte all her lyfe
And yf that thou be sicke, so god me saue
Thy verey frendes or a trewe knaue
Wol kepe the better, than thy wyfe for aye
After thy good, and hath don many a daye
And yf thou take a wyfe to the burthewe
Full ofte tyme it shall the sore rewe
This sentence, and an hundred sithes worse
Writeth this man there, god his bones curse
But take no kepe of suche vanyte
Defieth Theophrast, and herkeneth me.
¶ A wyfe is godds yefte verely
All other maner yeftes hardely
As landes, rentes, pasture, or comune
Or mouables, all ben yeftes of fortune
That passen, as a shadowe on a wall
But drede nat, yf plainly speke I shall
A wyfe wol laste and in thyn house endure
Well lenger than thee lyst paraventure
Marriage is a full great sacrament
He whiche hath no wyfe I holde hym shent
He lyueth helples, and all desolate
I speke of folke, in seculer estate.
And herkeneth why, I say not this for nought
A woman is for mannes helpe ywrought
The hye god, when he had Adam maked
And sawe hym alone bely naked
God of hys great goodnesse sayd than
Lette vs maken an helpe to thys man
Lyke to hym selfe, and than he made Eue
Here may ye se, and herby may ye preue
That a wyfe is mans helpe and comforte
His paradise terrestre and his disporte
So buxome and so vertuous is she
They must nedes lyue in vnyte
One flesshe they ben, & two soules as I gesse
Nat but one herte in wele and in distresse
A wyfe, ah sayn Mary, benedicite
Howe might a man haue any aduersite
That hath a wyfe certes I can nat say
The blysse that is betwixte hem tway
There may no tonge telle or herte thynke
If he be pore, she helpeth him to swynke
She kepeth his good, wasteth neuer a dell
All that her husbonde lyste, her lyketh well
She sayth nat ones nay, when he sayth ye
Do this (sayth he) all redy sir (sayth she)

¶ O blyssfull ordre of wedlocke precious
Thou arte so mery, and eke so vertuous
And so commended, and so approued eke
That every man, that halt him worth a leke
Upon his bare knees ought all his lyfe
Thanken god, that him hath sent a wyfe
Or pray to god him for to sende
A wyfe, to last vnto hys lyues ende
For than his lyfe is set in sekernesse
He may not be disceyued, as I gesse
So that he werche after hys wyues rede
Than may he boldely beaten vp his hede
They ben so trewe and also wyse
For which, if thou wilt werchen as the wise
Do alway so, as women will the rede
Lo how that Jacob, as these clerkes rede
By good counsayle of his mother Rebecke
Bounde the kydde skyn about hys necke
For whiche his fathers benesson he wan
Lo Judith, as the storye tell can
By wyse counsayle goddes people kept
And slewe hym holofernes whyle he slept
Lo Jubigail by counsayle, howesche
Saued her husbonde Nabail, whan that he
Shulde haue be slayne. And loke Hester also
By good counsayle delyuered out of wo
The people of god, & made hym Mardochee
Of Assure enhaunsed for to bee.
¶ There nys nothyng in gree superlatyfe
(As sayeth Seneca) above an humble wyfe
Suffre thy wyues tonge, as Caton bit
She shal cōmaunde, and thou shalt suffre it
And yet she will obey of curtesy.
A wife is keper of thyne husbondry
Well may the sicke man wayle and wepe
There as ther nis no wife the house to kepe
I warne the, if wisely thou wylt werche
Loue thy wife, as Christ loueth his chercche
If thou loue thy selfe, thou loue thy wyfe
For no man hateth his flesshe: but in his lyfe
He fostreth it, and therfore bydde I the
Cherysshe thy wyfe, or thou shalt neuer ythe
Husbōde and wife, what so men lape or play
Of worldly folke holde the seker way
They be so knyt, ther may non harme betide
And namely vpon the wyues side
For whiche January, of which I tolde
Considred hath in hys dayes olde
The lusty lyfe, the vertuous quiete
That is in mariage bony swete
And for hys frendes on a day he sent
To tellen hem the effect of his entent.
With face sadde, his tale hath he hem tolde
He said frendes, I am hooge and olde
And almost (god wot) on the pittes brinke
Upon my soule somwhat must I thynke
I haue my body foryly dispended
Blessed be god, it shal ben amended
For I woll ben certayne a wedded man
And that anon in all the hast I can
Unto some mayde, faire and tender of age
I pray you shapeth for my mariage
All sodaynly, for I woll nat abyde
And I woll fonden to espye on my syde
To whom I may be wedded hastely
But for as muche as ye ben more than I
Ye shullen rather suche a thyng espyen
Than I, and therfore lust best to alyen
But one thing warne I you my frēdes dere
I woll non olde wife haue in no manere
She shall not passe fyftene yere certayn
Olde fisshe & yong flesshe wol I haue fayn
Better is (qd he) a pyke than a pikerell
And better than olde beef is the tender veell
I wol no woman of thirty wynter age
It nys but beanstrawe and great forage
And eke these olde widowes (god it wote)
They connen so moche craft in wades bote
So moche broken harme whan hem lyst
That with hem shuld I neuer lyue in rest
For sondry scholes maketh subtel clerkes
A woman of many scholes halfe a clerke is
But certainly, a yonge thing may men gye
Right as mē may warm wax vnto hōdes plye
Wherfore I say you plainly in a clause
I wyl non olde wife haue for this cause.
For if so were that I had mischaunce
And in her couthe haue no pleasaunce
Than shuld I lede my lyfe in auoutry
And so streyght to the deuyll whan I dye
Ne children shulde I non vpon hir geten
Yet had I leuer houndes had me eten
Than that myne heritage shuld fall
In straunge hondes: and thus I tell you all
I dote nat, I wot [illegible] cause why
Men shuld wedden, and furthermore wot I
There speketh many a man of mariage
That wot no more of this thā doth my page
For whiche causes men shulde take a wife
If he may nat lyuen chaste his lyfe
Take him a wife with great deuotion
Bicause of lefull procreacion
Of children, to ꝑ honour of god aboue
And not only for paramour or for loue
And for they shulden lechery eschewe
And yelde her dettes whan that it is dewe

Or for that eche man shuld helpen other
In myschefe, as a fellet shuld the brother
And lyue in charitie ful brenely.
¶ But sirs (by youre leaue) that am nat I
For god be thanked, I bare make anaunt
I fele my lymmes hole and sufficiaunt
To don all that a man belongeth to
I wotte my selue best what I may do
Though I be hore, I fare as doth a tree
That blosmeth er that frute ywoxe be
The blossomed tree is neither dry ne deed
I fele no where hore but on my heed
Myn hert and my lymmes bene as grene
As laurell is through the yere to sene
And sithen that ye han herde all myn entent
I pray you to my wyll ye wol assent.
Diuers men diuersly him tolde
Of mariage, many ensamples olde
Some blameth it, some prayseth it certayne
But at the last, shortly for to sayne
(As al day falleth altercacion
Betwixt frendes in disputacion)
There fel a strife betwixt his brethren two
Of which that one was cleped Placebo
Justynus soothly called was that other
¶ Placebo said: O January brother
Ful lytel nede han ye my lorde so dere
Counsaile to axe of any that is here
But that ye ben so ful of sapience
That you ne lyketh for your hye prudence
To wayue fro the worde of Salomon
This worde saithe he vnto euerichone
Worke al thing by counsayle, thus said he
And than shalt thou nat repent the
But tho that Salomon spake suche a worde
Myn owne dere brother and my lorde
So wisely god my soule bringe to ease a rest
I holde your owne counsayle for the best.
For brother myne, take of me this mayne
I haue ben now a court man al my lyfe
And god wote, though I nowe vnworthy be
I haue stonden in ful great degre
Aboven lordes in full great estate
Yet had I neuer with non of hem debate
I neuer hem contraried trewly
I wot wel that my lorde can more than I
That he saith, I holde it ferme and stable
I say the same, or els thinge semblable
A ful great fole is any counsaylour
That serueth any lorde of hye honour
That dare presume, or ones thynke it
That his counsayle shuld passe his lordes wyt
Nay, lordes be no foles be my fay
Ye haue your selfe spoken here to day
So hye sentence, so holy, and so wel
That I consent, and confirme euery dell
Your wordes all, and your opinyon
By god there nys no man in all this town
Ne in Italye, coude bette haue sayd
Thrist holdeth hym of this ful wel a payd
And trewely it is an hye corage
Of any man that is stopen in age
To taken a yonge wyfe, by my father kyn
Your hert hongeth on a holy pyn
Doth now in this matere right as you lest
For finally I holde it for the best.
¶ Justinus that ay sate and herde
Right in this wyse to Placebo he answerde
Nowe brother myne be patient I you pray
Sith ye haue sayd, now herken what I say
¶ Seneca among other wordes wise
Sayth, that a man ought hym wel auyse
To whom he yeueth his londe or his catell
And sithens I ought auyse me right wel
To whom I gyue my goodes away fro me
But ful muche more I ought auysed be
To whom I gyue my body: for alway
I warne you wel it is no childes play
To take a wyfe without auysement
Men must enquere (this is myn assent)
Whether she be sobre, wise, or dronkelewe
Or proude or elles wayes a threwe
A chyder, or a waster of thy good
Other ryche or poore, or elis a man is wood
And be it so, that no man fynd shall
Non in thys worlde, that trotteth hole in all
Ne man, ne best, suche as men can deuyse
But nathelesse, it ought ynough suffice
With any wyfe, if so were that he hadde
Mo good shewes, than her vyces hadde
And all thys asketh layser to enquere
For god wotte I haue wept many a tere
Full priuely, sith I had a wyfe
Prayse who so wol a wedded manes life
Certeyn I fynde in it but cost and care
And obseruaunces of all bysshes bare
And yet god wotte, my neighbours about
And namely of women many a rout
Sayn that I haue the most stedfast wyfe
And eke the meekest one that beareth lyfe
But I wot best, where wringeth me my shoe
Ye may for me, ryght as you lyst do
Auyse you, ye ben a man of age
Nowe that ye entren in to mariage
And namely with a yonge wyfe and a fayre
By him that made water, erth, and ayre

The

The yongest man that is in all thys rout
Is bely ynowe to bringe it about
To haue his wyfe alone, trusteth me
Ye shall nat plesen her yeres thre
Thys is to sayn, to don her plesaunce
I wife asketh full muche obseruaunce
I praye you that ye be not euyll apayde.
Wel (qd this January) a bast thou al saide
Strawe for thy Senec, & for thy prouerbes
I count it not worth a pannyer of herbes
Of sondry termes, wiser men than thou
As thou hast herde, assenteth it right nowe
To my purpose Placebo, what say ye
I say it is a cursed man (quod he)
That letteth matrymony (certeyn)
And with that worde they risen sodaynly
And ben assented fully, that he shoulde
Be wedded whē hym lyst, & where he wolde
Highe fantasy and curiousnesse
Fro day to day, gan in the soule enpresse
Of January, about hys maryage
Many faire shappe, and many faire visage
Ther passeth through his herte night by night
As who so toke a mirrour polished bright
And sette it in a comen market place
Than shulde he se many a figure pace
By hys mirrour, and in the same wyse
Gan January within his thought deuyse
Of maydens, whiche that dwellen besyde
He wyst not where he might abyde
For yf that one had beauty in her face
Another stode so in the peoples grace
For her sadnesse and her benignyte
That of the people gretest voyce had she
And some were ryche and had badde name
But nethetes, betwixt ernest and game
He at last apoynted hym on one
And lette all other from his herte gone
And chese her of hys owne authorite
For loue is blynde al day, and may not se
And whē that he was in his bedde ibrought
He purtreyde in his herte and in his thought
Her freshe beaute, and her age tender
Her myddle small, her armes longe & slender
Her wyfly gouernaunce, and her gentylnesse
Her womanly bearyng, and her sadnesse
And when he was on her condiscended
Him thought his choise might nat bē amended
For when that he him self concluded had
Him thought eche other mennes wit so bad
That impossible it were to reply
Ayenst hys choice, this was his fantasy
Hys frendes sent he to, at his instaunce
And prayeth hem to don him that pleasaūce
That hastely they wolde to him come
He wolde bredgen her labour all and some
Nedeth no more for him to go ne ryde
He was apoynted there he wolde abyde
Placebo came, and eke his frendes some
And alderfirst he badde hem all a bone
That non of hem non argumentes make
Ayenst his purpose that he hath take
Which purpose was plesant to god (sayd he)
And very grounde of his prosperite.
He sayd there was a mayden in the town
Whiche of beauty hath great renown
All were it so, she were of small degre
Suffiseth him her yought and her beauty
Which mayd he sayd, he wold haue to wife
To leden in ease and in holynesse hys life
And thanketh god, ꝑ he might haue her all
That no wight his blisse parten shall
And prayeth hem to labour in thys nede
And shapeth that he fayle nat to spede
For than he sayd, his spirite was at ease
Than is (qd he) nothyng may me displease
Saue o thyng prycketh in my conscience
The whiche I will reherse in your presence
I haue (quod he) herde saye full yore ago
There may no man haue parfite blisses two
This is to saye, in erthe and eke in heuyn
For though he kept him fro the sinnes seuyn
And eke from euery braunce of thilke tre
Yet is there so parfite prosperyte
And so great ease and lust in maryage
That euer I am agast nowe in myn age
That I shall lede nowe so mery a lyfe
So delicate without wo or stryfe
That I shal haue mine heuen in erth here
For sithen very heuen is bought so dere
With tribulacion and great penaunce
Howe should I than liuing in such plesaūce
As all wedded men don with their wyues
Come to ꝑ blisse, ther Christ eterne on liue is
This is my drede, and ye my brethren twey
Assoyleth me this question I you prey.
Iustinus, whiche that hated hys folye
Answerd anon right in his iapery
And for he wolde his longe tale abrege
He wolde non auctorite allege
But sayd: sir, so there be non obstacle
Other then this, god of his hye miracle
And of his mercy: may so for you werche
That er ye han your rightes of holy cherche
Ye may repent of wedded mannes life
In whiche ye sayn is neither wo ne strife

And

And eke god forbede, but yf he sente
A wedded man grace hym to repent
Wel after, rather than a single man
And therfore sir, the best rede that I can
Dispeyreth you not, but haue in memory
Parauenture she may be your purgatory
She may by goddes meane a goddes whip
Thus shall your soule vp to heuen skip
Swifter then doth an arowe out of a bowe
I hope to god hereafter ye shall knowe
That there nys non so great felicite
In maryage, ne neuer non shall be
That you shal lette of your saluacion
So that ye vse it as skyll is and reason
The lustes of your wife attemperatly
And that ye please her nat to amorously
And that ye kepe you eke fro other syn
My tale is don, for my witte is thyn
Beth nat agaste hereof my dere brother
But lete vs wade fro this mater to another
The wife of Bathe, yf ye vnderstande
Of mariage, whiche ye haue in hande
Declareth full well in a lytell space
Fareth nowe wel, god haue yeuin his grace.

And vp thys worde, Justine a bis brother
Han take her leaue, and eche of hem of other
For when they sawe it muste nedes be
They wrought so by wise and sly treate
That she this mayde whiche May hight
As hastely as euer that she myght
Shall wedded be to thys January
I trowe it were to long to you tary
Yf I you tolde of euery escrypte and bonde
By whiche she was festred in hys londe
Or for to herken of her ryche araye
But finally icomen is the day
That to chirche bothe ben they went
For to receyue the holy sacrament
Forth cometh ỳ preest, w stole about his neck
And badde her be lyke Sara and Rebeck
In wisedome and trueth of mariage
And sayd his orisons, as is the vsage
And crouched hem, a bad god shuld hem blis
And made all seker ynowe with holynes
Thus ben they wedded with solempnite
And at feest sitteth he and she
With other worthy folke vpon the deyes
Al full of ioye and blysse is the paleyes
And ful of instrumentes and of vitayle
The most deyntes of all Italye
Before him stode instrumētes of such sown
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion
Ne made neuer suche a melody.
At euery cours came loude mynstralcy
That neuer Joab tromped for to here
Nother Theodomas yet half so clere
At Thebes, when the cite was in dout
Bacchus the wyne hem skynketh all about
And Venus laugheth on euery wight
For January was become her knyght
And wolde bothe assayn hys corage
In liberte, and eke in mariage
And with her fire brande in her honde about
Daunceth before the bryde and al the rout
And certaynly, I dare well saye right this
Emelyus that god of wedding is
Saw neuer this life, so merry a wedded mi
Holde thou thy peace thou poet Marcia
That writest vs that ilke wedding merry
Of Philology and hym Mercury
And of the songes that the Muses songe
To smal is both thy penne & eke thy tonge
For to discriuen of thys mariage
Whe tender youth hath wedded stouping age
There is such mirth, ỳ it may nat be writte
Assayeth your selfe, than may ye witten
If that I lacke or non in thys matere
But sir, wel that sytte, with so benigne a chere
Her to beholde, it semed fayrye
Queene Hester loked neuer with such an eye
On Assuere, so meke a loke hath she
I may you nat deuise al her beaute
But thus muche of her beauty tel I may
That she was lyke ỳ bright morow of may
Full of all beauty, and of pleasaunce
Thys January is rauysshed in a traunce
And at euery tyme he loked in her face
But in hys hert, he gan her to manace
That he ỳ night, i his armes wold her streyn
Harder, than euer Paris dyd Helayn
But natheles, yet had he great pety
That thilke nyght, offende her muste he
And thought alas, O tender creature
Nowe wolde god ye might well endure
All my corage, it is so sharpe and kene
I am agast, ye shall it nat susteene
But god forbede, that I dyd all my myght
Now wolde god that it were waxe nyght
And that the nyght wolde laste euer mo
I wouldе that all these people were ago
And finally he doth all hys labour
As he best myght, sauyng hys honour
To hast hem fro the meate in subtyll wyse
The tyme came, that reason was to ryse
And after that men daunced, & dronke fast
And spices all about the house they cast

And

And ful of ioye & blysse is euery man
Al but a squyer, that hyght Damyan
Which carfe before the knyght many a day
He was so ravished on his lady May
That for very payne he was nygh wode
Almost he swelt, and swouned there he stode
So sore hath Venus hurt him wt her brãde
So fresshe he was, and therto so yeande
And to his bedde he wente him hastely
No more of him at this time spekę I
But there I let him wepe ynowe and playne
Tyl the fresh May wol rewen on his payne.
O perilous fire, þ in the bedde rawe bredeth
O familyer foe, that his seruice bedeth
O seruaunt traytour, false homely hewe
Lyke to the adder slye in bosome vntrewe
O January dronken in pleasaunce
God shyld vs all from your iniquitaunce
Of mariage, se howe this Damian
Thyne owne squiere and thy bozne man
Entendeth to don the villany
God graunt the thyn homely foe to espye
For in this worlde nys were pestilence
Than homely for, al day in thy presence
Parfourned hath þ sun his arke dyurne
No lenger may the body of him soiourne
On orizont, as in that latitude
Night with his mantyl, that is darke & rude
Gan for to spręde, the hemyspery about
For whiche departed is the lust, rout
Fro January, with thonke on euery syde
Home to her house lustely they ryde
Where as they don her thynges, as hem lest
And whan they sawe her tyme to go to rest
Sone after this lusty January
Wolle go to bedde, he wold no lenger tary
He drinketh ipocras, clarrey, and vernage
Of spices hote, to encrease his corage
And many a iectuary had he ful fyne
Such as the cursed monke dan Cõstantine
Hath writen in his boke of Coitu
To eten hem al he nolde nothynge eschewe
And thus to his priuy frendes said he
For goddes loue, as sone as it may be
Let voyde al this house in curteys wyse sone
(Whan dronken, and the trauers dre we anon
So hasted January, it must be done
The bride was brought to bed as stil as ston
And whan the bed was with þ preest iblessed
Out of þ chãbre hath euery wight hem dressed
And January hath fast in armes take
His fresshe May, his paradise, his make
He lulleth her, he kysseth her ful ofte
With thicke bristels of his berde vnsofte
Like þ skin of hoũdfysh, as sharp as bzere
For he was shaue al newe in his manere
He rubbeth her vpon her tender face
And said thus: Alas, I mote trespace
To you my spouse, and you greatly offende
Or time come that I wol down discende
But natheles, considreth this (qd he)
There nys no workeman, what so euer he be
That may both wirche wel and hastely
This wol be don at leyser parfitly
It is no force howe longe that we play
In trewe wedlocke coupled be we tway
And blessed be the yoke that we been in
For in our actes we mowe do no syn
A man may do no synne with his wife
Nehurte him selfe with his owne knyfe
For we haue leaue to play vs by the lawe
Thus laboureth he, tyl the day gan dawe
And than he taketh a soppe in fyne clarre
And vpright in his bedde than sytteth he
And after that he syngeth full loude and clere
And kyst his wife, and maketh wanton chere
He was al coltishe, and full of ragery
And full of gergon, as is a flecked pye
The slacke skyne about his necke shaketh
While that he sang, so chaunteth he & craketh
But god wot what May thought in her hert
Whan she him sawe, vp sittyng in his shert
In his night cappe, with his necke lene
She prayseth not his playeng worth a bene
Than said he thus: my rest wol I take
Now day is come, I may no lenger wake
And down he layde his heed, & slept tyl prime
And afterward, whan that he sawe hys tyme
Up riseth January, but the fresshe May
Holdeth her chambre to the fourth day
As vsage is of wyues for the best
For euery labour somtyme mote haue rest
Or elis longe may he not endure
This is to say, no lyues creature
Be it fisshe or beest, bridde or man
Now wol I speke of wofull Damyan
That langureth for loue, as ye shall here
Therefore I speke to him in this manere.
I say, O sely Damian, alas
Answere to this demaunde, as in this cas
Howe shalt thou to thy lady fresshe May
Tell thy wo, she wol alway say nay
Eke if thou spekę, she wol thy wo bewray
God be thyn helpe, I can no better say
This sicke Damian in Venus fyre
So brenneth, that he dieth for desyre

For which he put his lyfe in auenture
No lenger might he in this wise endure
But priuely a penner gan he borowe
And in a lettre wrote he al his sorowe
In maner of a complaynt or a lay
Vnto this faire and freshe lady May
And in a purse of silke, hongynge on his heer
He hath it put, and layde it at his heer
¶ The mone at noon ryde that tide day
(That January hath ywedded freshe May)
Out of Taure was in the Crabbe gleden
So long hath May in her chambre bidden
As custome is, vnto these nobles all
A bryde shal not eten in the hall
Tyl dayes four, or thre at the lest
Ipassed ben, than let her gon to rest.
¶ The fourth day compleet fro noon to noon
Whan that the hie masse was ydon
In hall sat this January and May
As fresshe as is the bright somers day
And so befyl, how that this good man
Remembreth him vpon this Damian
And said: sayntMary, howe may this be
That Damian entendeth not to me
Is he aye sicke: or howe may this betide
His squiers, which that stoden him beside
Excused him, because of his sickenesse
Which letted him to don his besynesse
Non other cause might make him tary
That me forthinketh (qd this January)
He is a gentyl squire be my trouthe
If that he died, it were harme and routhe
He is as wise, discrete, and secre
As any man that I wot of his degre
And therto manly and seruysable
And for to be a thrifty man right able
But after meate, as sone as euer I may
I wol my selfe viset him, and eke May
To don him al the confort that I can
And for that worde, him blessed euery a man
That of his bounte and of his gentylnesse
He wold so comforten in his distresse
His squier, for it was a gentyl dede
Dame (qd this January) take good hede
That after meate, ye and your women all
(Whā ye haue ben in chābre out of this hall)
That al ye gone to se this Damyan
Bothe him disporte, he is a gentyl man
And tellen him that I wol him visite
Haue I nothyng but rested me a lyte
And spede you fast, for I wol abyde
Tyl that ye slepe fast by my syde
And with that worde he gan to him call
A squyer, that was Marshal of his hall
And told him certayn thynge that he wolde.
This fresh May hath streight her way hold
With al her women, vnto this Damyan
Downe by his beddes syde sat she than
Confortyng him as goodly as she may.
This Damyan, whan that he his time say
In secrete wise, his purse and eke his bylle
(In which he had writtren all his wylle)
Hath put into her honde withoutten more
Saue that he sighed wonders depe & sore
And sothly, to her right thus said he
Mercy, and that ye discouer nat me
For I am dead, if that this thing be kydde
This purse hath she in her bosome hydde
And went her way, ye gete no more of me
But vnto January icome is she
And on his beddes syde she sit ful softe
He taketh her, and kyssed her ful ofte
And layde him downe to slepe, & that anon
She fayned her, as that she must gon
There as ye wote, ech euery wight hath nede
And whan she of this byl hath taken hede
She rent it al to cloutes, and at last
Into the preuy, softly she it cast.
Who studyeth now but faire freshe May
And adown by January she lay
That slept, tyl the cough hath him awaked
Anon he pra[illegible] her to stripe her all naked
He wold of her (he said) haue some pleasāce
He said her clothes did him encombraunce
And she obeyeth be she lefe or lothe
But lest that precious folke be vnwrothe
How that he wrought, I dare nat to you tel
Or whether she thought it paradise or hell
But I let hem worche in her wise
Tyl euynsong rong, that they must arise
Were it by destroy or by auenture
Were it by influence, or by nature
Or constellacion that in suche estate
The heuen stode, that tyme fortunate
(Was for to put a byl of Venus werkes)
For al thing hath tyme, as sayn clerkes
To any woman for to gete her loue
I can not say, but the great god aboue
That knoweth, that non acte is causeles
He deme all, for I wol holde my pes.
But sothe is this, how that this freshe May
Hath take suche impression that day
Of pyte, on this sicke Damyan
That fro her hert she dryue ne can
The remembraunce for to don him ease

Certyn

Certain (thought she) whō this thing displeaſe
I recke not, for this I him aſſure
I loue him beſt of any creature
Though he no more had than his ſherte.
Lo pitee renneth ſoone in gentyl herte
Here may ye ſe, howe excellent franchiſe
In wommen is, whan they hem narowe auyſe
Some tyraunt is, as there ben many one
That hath an herte as harde as any ſtone
Which wold haue let him ſterue in ꝑ place
Wel rather thā haue graunted him her grace
And her reioyſed in her cruel pryde
And not haue reched to ben an homycide.
This gentyl May, fulfylled of al pyte
Right ſo of her honde a letter made ſhe
In whiche ſhe graunteth him her very grace
There lacketh nought, but onely tyme & place
Where that ſhe might to his luſt ſuffiſe
For it ſhal be, right as he wold deuyſe
And whan ſhe ſaw her tyme vpon a day
To vyſite this Damyan goth this faire May
And ſutterly this letter down ſhe thruſt
Under his pyllow, rede it if him lyſt
She taketh him by the hōd, & herd him twiſt
So ſecretly, that no wight of it wiſt
And bad him ben all hole, & forth ſhe went
To January, whan that he for her ſent.
Up riſeth Damyan the next morowe
Al paſſed was his ſickneſs and his ſorowe
He kembeth him and proyneth & piketh
And doth al that his lady luſt & lyketh
And eke to January he gothe as lowe
As euer dyd a dogge for the bowe
He is ſo pleſaunt to euery man
For craft is al, who that it can
That euery wyght is fain to ſpeken him goode
And fully in his ladyes grace he ſtode
Thus let I Damyan about his nede
And in my tale, forth I wol procede.
Some clerkes holden that felycite
Stont in delyte, and therfore certayn he
This noble January with all his might,
In honeſt wyſe as longeth to a knight
Shope him to lyue ful deliciouſly
His houſyng, his array, as honeſtly
To his degre, was made as a kynges
Among other of his honeſt thynges
He had a garden walled all with ſtone
So fayre a garden was there neuer none
For out of dout, I verily ſuppoſe
That he that wrote the Romant of the Roſe
Ne couth of it the beaute wel deuyſe
Ne Priapus, ne myght not ſuffiſe
Though he be god of gardens, for to tell
The beaute of the garden, and of the well
That ſtont vnder a laurer alway grene
Ful ofte tyme kyng Pluto and his quene
Proſerpina, and al her fayrie
Diſporten hem, and maken melody
About that well, and daunced as men tolde
This noble knight, this January the olde
Such deynte hath, in it to walke and play
That he wol ſuffre no wight to bere the kaye
Saue he him ſelfe, for the ſpecial wicket
He bare alway of ſyluer a clycket
With which, whan that him lyſt vnclicket
And whan that he wold pay his wife her det
In ſomer ſeaſon, thider wolde he go
And May his wife, & no wight but they two
And thinges which that were not don a bedde
He in ꝑ garden perfourmed hem and ſpedde
And in this wiſe, many a mery day
Lyued this January and this freſhe May
But worldly ioye may nat alway endure
To January, ne to no lyuyng creature.
O ſodayne hape, O thou fortune vnſtable
Lyke to the Scorpion diſceyuable
That flatteſt ẅ thy heed whan ꝑ wolt ſtinge
Thy taile is derth, thrugh thyne enuenomyng
O traytreſſ ioye, O ſwete poyſon queynt
O monſter, that ſo ſodainly canſt peynt
Thy giftes, vnder the hewe of ſtedfaſtneſſe
That thou diſceyueſt both more and leſſe
Why haſt thou January thus diſceyued
And haddeſt him for thy frende receyued
And now thou haſt beraft him bothe his eyen
For ſorowe of which deſireth he to dyen
Alas, this noble January that is ſo free
Amydde his luſt and his proſperite
Is woxen blynd, and all ſodainly
His dethe therfore deſyreth he vtterly
And therwithal, the fire of ielouſy
(Leſt that his wife ſhulde fal in ſome foly)
So brent his herte, that he wold faine
That ſome man, both him & her had ſlayne
For neuer after his deth, ne in his lyfe
Ne wold he that ſhe were loue ne wife
But euer lyue a wydow in clothes blacke
Soole, as the turtle doth ꝑ hath loſt her make
But at the laſt, after a moneth or tway
His ſorow gan to aſſwage, ſoth to ſay
For whan he wyſt it might non other be
He pacyently toke his aduerſyte
Saue out of dout may he nat for gone
That he was ielous euer more in one
Which ielouſy, it was ſo outragious

That neither in halle ne in none other hous
Ne in non other place neuer mo
He nolde trete her, neither ride ne go
But if that he had hande on her al day
For which ful often wepeth fresshe May
That lonely Damyan so benignely
That she moste either dye sodainly
Or els she moste have him at her wille
She wayteth whan her herte should to tylle
Upon that other syde Damyan
Become is, the sorowfullest man
That euer was, for neyther nyght ne day
Ne myght he speke a worde to fresshe May
As to his purpose of no suche matere
But if that January must it here
That had an hande vpon her euer mo
But natheles, by writyng to and fro
And privy signes, wyst he what she mene
And she knewe all the signes of his entente.
O January, what myght thee it availe
Tho thou mightest se, as fer as shippes saile
For as good is a blynde man disceyued be
As to be disceyued, whan that a man may se.
Lo Argus, which had an hundred eyen
For al that euer he couth poze and prien
Yet was he blent, and god wot so ben mo
That wenen wisely that it is not so
Passe over is an ease, I say no more.
The fresshe May, of which I spake of pore
In warme wax hath printed this cliket
That January bare of that smal wicket
By whiche vnto his garden oft he went
And Damyan that knewe her entent
The cliket counterfayted privily
There nys no more to say, but hastely
Some wonder by this cliket shal betyde
Whiche ye shal heren, if ye wol abyde.
O noble Ouide, soth sayest thou god wote
What sligth is it, though it be long and hote
That he wyl fynde it out in some manere
By Pyramus and Thisbe, may men lere
Thouz they were kept ful long streit ouer all
They ben accozded, to wryng thzough a wal
Ther nys no wight couth finde such a sleight
But now to purpose, er the dayes eight
Were passed, er the moneth Jule befyll
That January hath caught so greate a wyll
Thzough eggyng of his wyfe, him for to play
In his garden, and no wight but they tway
That in a morow, vnto this May sayd he
Rise vp my wife, my love, my lady fre
The turtell voice is herde my lady swete
The wynter is gon, with al his raynes wete
Come forth now with thyn eyen columbine
Now fayrer ben thy bzestes than is wine
The garden is enclosed all about
Come forth my white spouse out of doute
Thou hast me wounded in my herte, o, wyfe
No spotte in the nas in all thy lyfe
Come forth and let vs taken our disporte
I chese the for my wife and my comforte
Such olde lewde wozdes vsed he
And Damyan a signe made she
That he should go before with his cliket
This Damyan hath opened this wicket
And in he sterte, and that in suche manere
That no wight might it se ne here
And shyt him vnder a bushe anon.
This January, as blynde as is a ston
With May in his hande, and no wight mo
Into his fresshe garden is he go
And clapte to the wicket sodainly.
Now wife (qd he) here nys but thou & I
That arte the creature that I best love
For by that lozde that sytt vs al aboue
I had leuer dyen on a knyfe
Than the offende, dere true wyfe
For goddes sake thynke howe I the chers
Nat for courtise, ne other good desires
But onely for the love I had to the
And though that I be olde and may not se
Be to me true, and I wol tel you why
Certes, thze thinges shal ye wyn therby
First love of Christe, & to your selfe honour
And al myne heritage, towne and tour
I gyue it you, maketh chartres as ye lyst
This shal be don to morowe er sunne rysse
So wisely god my soule bzing to blysse
I pray you on couenaunt that ye me kysse
And though that I be ielous wite nought
Ye ben so depe enprinted in my thought
That whan I consider your beaute
And therwithal, the bnikly elde of me
I may not certes, though I should dye
Forbere, to ben out of your company
For dery loue, this is withouten doute
Now kysse me wife, and let vs rome about
This fresshe May, whs she these wozds hath
Benignely to January answerd
But first and forwarde she began to wepe
I haue (qd she) a soule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and also myn honour
And of wifehode thilke tender flour
Whiche that I haue ensured in youre honde
Whan that the priest to you my body bonde
Wherfore I wol answere in this maner

By

By the leaue of you my lorde so dere
I pray god that neuer dawe that day
That I ne sterue, as foule as woman may
Yf euer I do to my kynne that shame
Of eis that I empayre so my name
That I be false, and if I do that lacke
To stripe me, and put me in a sacke
And in the next ryuer do me drenche
I am a gentyl woman, and no wenche
Why speke ye thus, but men ben euer untrew
And women haue reproue of you, aye new
Ye can non other cõmunyng, I leue
But speke to vs of untrust and repreue
And with ỳ word she saw where Damian
Sate in the bushe, and knele he began
And with her fyngers signes made she
That Damian shuld clymbe vpon a tre
That charged was with frute, & vp he went
For wetly he knewe all her entent
And euery signe that she couth make
Better than January her owne make
For in a letter she had tolde him all
Of this matter, howe that he worch shall
And thus I let him sytte in the pery
And January and May romyng full mery.
Bright was the day, & blewe ỳ firmament
Phebus of gold down hath his stremes sente
To gladen euery flour with his warmenesse
He was that time in Geminy, as I gesse
But lytle fro his declynacion
The causer of Iouis exaltacion
And so befyl that bright morowe tyde
That in the garden, on the farther syde
Pluto, that is the king of Fayrye
And many a lady in his compayne
Folowyng his wife, the quene Proserpyne
Ech after other right as a lyne
Whiles she gadred floures in a mede
In Claudian ye may the story rede
How in his grisely carte he her fette
This kyng of Fayry down him sette
Upon a benche of turues freshe and grene
And right anon thus said he to his quene.
My wife (qd he) that may nat say nay
The experience so proueth euery day
The treason, which that womẽ doeth to man
Ten hundred thousande tel I can
Notable, of your untrouth and brotelnesse
O Salomon, richest of all richesse
Fulfylde of sapience, and of worldly glory
Full worthy ben thy wordes in memory
To euery wight, that wit and reason can
Thus prayseth he the bounte of man
Among a thousande men yet fonde I one
But of all women fonde I neuer none
Thus saith ỳ king, ỳ knoweth your wicked-
And Jesus Filius Sirach, as I gesse (nesse
Ne speketh of you but seide reuerence
A wyde fire, a corrupte pestilence
So fall upon your bodyes yet to night
Ne se ye not this honorable knyght
Bicause (alas) that he is blynde and olde
His owne man shall maken him cokolde
Lo where he sytte, the lechour in the tre
Now wol I graunt of my maieste
Unto this olde blynde worthy knyght
That he shal haue agayne his eye syght
Whan that his wife wold done him villany
Than shal he knowe al her harlotry
Both in reprefe of her and other mo.
Ye shal (qd Proserpyne) and woll ye so
Now be my mothers soule sir I swere
That I shal yeuen her sufficient answere
And all women after for her sake
That though they ben in any gylte take
With face bolde, they shullẽ hem self excuse
And bere hem doun, that wold hem accuse
For lacke of answere, non of hem shall dyen
All had he sey a thyng with both his eyen
Yet shuld we women so visage it hardely
And wepe and swere, and chyde subtelly
That ye shal ben as leude as gees
What recketh me of your auctorites.
I wot wel this Irwe, this Salomon
Fonde of vs women foles many one
But though he ne fonde no good woman
Yet there hath he fonde many another man
Women ful trewe, full good, & ful vertuous
Witnesse of hem that dwel in Christes hous
With martyrdom, they proued her constaũce
The Romain gestes eke make remembraunce
Of many a very true wife also
But sir, be not wroth that it be so
Though that he sayd he fond no good womã
I pray you take the sentence of the man
He ment thus, that in souerayn bounte
Nys non but god, that sitteth in trinite.
Eye, for very god that nys but one
What make ye so muche of Salomon
What though he made a tẽple goddes house
What though he were riche and glorious
So made he a temple of false goddes
How might he don a thing ỳ more forbod is
Parde as faire as ye his name enplaster
He was a lechour, and an idolastre
And in his elde, very god forsoke

And if that god hadde(as taith the bokc)
ypared him for his fathers sake,he shulde
Haue lost his reigne somer than he wolde
I set nat of all the villany
That ye of women wryte,a butterflye
I am a woman,nedes more I speke
Or elis swel,eyl myne hert breke
For sithen he said,that we ben langietteres
As euer more I hole broke my tresses
I shall nat spare for no curtesy
To speke hem harme,that wolde vs villany.
Dame(qd this Pluto)be no lenger wrothe
I gyue it vp:but sythe I swore myn othe
That I wold graunt him his syght ayen
My word shal stand,I warne I you certeyn
I am a kyng,it set me not to lye.
And I(qd she)a quene of Fayrie
Her answere she shall haue I vndertake
Let vs no mo wordes herof make
Forsoth I wol no lenger you contrary.
Nowe let vs turne agayne to January
That in the garden with this faire May
Syngeth merier than the Popyngay
You lone I best,I shall,and other non
So long about the aleyes is he gon
Till he was comen ayenst chylke pery
Where as this Damyan sitteth ful mery
On hye,among these freshe leues grene
This freshe May,that is so bright & shene
Gan for to syke,and said:alas I syde
Now sir(qd she)for ought that may betyde
I must haue of these perres that I here se
Or I more dye,so sore longeth me
To eten of the small perres grene
Helpe for her lone that is beuin quene
I tel you wel a woman in my plyte
May haue to frute so great an appetyte
That she may dyen,but she it haue.
Alas(qd he)that I ne had here a knane
That couth clymbe,alas,alas(qd he)
For I am blynd.ye sir no force(qd she)
But wolde ye vouchsafe for goddes sake
The pery in your armes for to take
For wel I wotte that ye mystrust me
Than shuld I clymbe well ynough(qd she)
So I my foote myght sette vpon your backe
Forsoth said he,in me shall be no lacke
Myght I you helpe with myn hert blode
He stoupeth down,& on his backe she stode
And caught her by a twyst,and vp she goth
Ladies I pray you be not wroth
I can nat glose,I am a rude man
And sodainly anon this Damyan
Gan pullen vp the smocke,& in the thronge
Of great tene,a thistry and a longe
She said it was the merriest fyt
That euer in her life she was at yet
My lordes tene feruerth me nothing thus
It folderth twyfolde by swete Jesus
He may nat swync worth a peke
And yet he is ful gemyl and full meke
This is lener to me than an eyrnlong
And whan that Pluto saw this wrong
To January he gaue agayn his sight
And made him se aswell as euer he myght
And whan he had caught his sight agayne
Ne was there neuer man of thing so faine
But on his wife his thought was euer mo
Up to the tree he cast his eyen two
And sawe how Damian his wife had dressen
In suche manere,it may not be expressed
But if I wold speke vncurtesly
And vp he yaf a roring and a crye
As doth the mother whan the childe shal dye
Out helpe,alas(harowe)he gan to crye
For sorow almost he gan to dye
That his wife was swyued in the pery
O stronge lady store what dost thou
And she answered:sir what ayleth you
Haue patience and reason in your mynde
I haue you holpen of both your eyen blynde
Up peryl of my soule,I shal nat lyen
As me was taught to helpe with your eyen
Was nothyng better for to make you se
Than strogle with a man vpon a tree
God wot I did it in ful good entent
Strogle(qd he)ye algate in it went
Stylle and rounde as any bell
It is no wonder though thy bely swell
The smocke on his brest lay so crche
And euer me thought he poynted on ꝑ breche
God gyue you both on shames deth to dien
He swyued the,I saw it with myne eyen
And elis I be honged by the halse
Than is(qd she)my medicyn falle
For certayn,if that ye myght se
Ye wolde nat say these wordes to me
Ye haue some glymsyng,& no parfite syght
I se(qd he)as wel as euer I myght
Thanked be god,with both myne eyen two
And by my trouth me thought he dyd so
Ye mase ye mase,good sir(qd she)
This thanke haue I for that I made you se
Alas(qd she)that euer I was so kynde
Now dame(qd he)let all passe out of mynde
Come down my lefe,and if I haue myssayde

God

God helpe me so, as I am ful apayde
But by my fathers soule, I wende haue seyn
Nowe that this Damyan had by the seyn
And that thy smocke had lyen vpon his brest
Ye sir (qd she) ye may wene as ye lest
But sir, a man that waketh out of his slepe
He may not sodaynly wel taken kepe
Upon a thing, ne se it parfitely
Tyll that he be adawed verily
Right so a man that longe hath blynde be
He may not sodaynly so wel yse
First whan the sight is newe comen agayn
As he that hath a day or two ystayn
Tyll that your sight stabled be a while
There may full many a syght you begyle
Beware I pray you, for by heuen kyng
Ful many a man weneth to se a thyng
And it is al another than it semeth
He that mysconceyueth ofte mysdemeth
And with that worde she lept doun fro ꝑ tre
This January, who is gladde but he
He kysseth her, he clyppeth her full ofte
And on her woombe he stroketh her ful softe
And to his paleys home he hath her lad
Nowe good men I pray you, bere ye al glad
Thus endeth here my tale of January
God blesse vs al, and his mother Mary.

¶ Thus endeth the Marchaunres tale and here foloweth the wyfe of Bathes prologue.

Experyence, though none auctorite
were in this worlde, is ryght ynow for me
To speke of wo that is in maryage
For lordinges, syth I twelue yere was of age
Thanked be god, that is eterne on lyue
Husbondes at chirche dore haue I had fyue
If I so ofte myght haue wedded be
And all were worthy men in her degre.
But me was tolde not long ago iwys
That sythen Christ went neuer but onys
To weddyng, in the cane of Galilee
That by thilke ensample taught he me
That I ne shuld wedded be, but onys.
¶ Lo here, whiche a sharpe word for ꝑ wones
Besyde a well, Jesu god and man
Spake in reprefe of the Samaritan
Thou hast had fyue husbandes (qd he)
And that like man that nowe hath the
Is not thyn husbonde: thus sayd he certayn
What he ment therby I can not sayn
But that I aske a poynte, why the fyfte man
Was nat husbonde to the Samaritan
Howe many might she haue in maryage?
yet herde I neuer tellen in myne age
Upon this numbre trewe definicion
Men may deuine, and glosen vp and doun
But well I wotte expresse without lye
God badde vs for to wexe and multiplye
That gentil text can I well vnderstonde
Eke wel I wote (he sayd) myn husbonde
Shuld leaue father & mother, & take to me
But of numbre no mencyon made he
Of bigamye or of octogamye
Why shuld de men speke of it vilany?
Lo he the wyse kyng Salamon
I trowe had wyues mo than on
As wolde god it lefull were to me
To be refreshed halfe so ofte as he
Whiche a gifte of god had he, for his wyues
No man hath suche, ꝑ in this worlde a liue is
God wote this noble king, as to my wytte
The first nyght had many a mery fytte
With eche of hem, so well was hym alme
Blessed be god, I haue had fyue
Welcome the sixte when euer he shall
For soth I will not kepe me chaste in all
When myn husbonde is fro the worlde ygon
Some christen man shal wedde me anon
For than the apostel sayth, that I am fre
To wedde a godeshalfe, where it liketh me
He sayth, that to be wedded is no sinne
Better is to be wedded than to brinne
What recketh me though folke say vilany
Of shrewde Lameth, and of his bigamy
I wote wel Abraham was an holy man
And Jacob eke, as fer as euer I here can
And eche of hem had wyues mo than two
And many another holy man also
Where can you say in any maner age
That euer god defended marryage
By expresse wordes? I praye you tell me
Or where commaunded he virginite?
I wote as well as ye, it is no drede
The Apostel, when he spake of maydenhede
He sayd, therof precept had he none
Men may counsayle a woman to be one
But counsayling is no commaundement
He put it in our owne iudgement
For had god comaunded maydenhede
Thē had he dampned wedding out of drede
And certes, if there were no sede ysowe

Virginite than wherof shoulde it growe
Noule durst not commaund at the leste
A thing, of whiche his maker yaue none heste
The darte is set vp for virginite
Catche who so may, who renneth best let se.
But this worde is not taken of euery wight
But there as god lyst yeue it of his might
I wotte well that the apostel was a mayde
But netheles, though that he wrote or saide
He wolde that euery wight were such as he
All nys but counsayle to virginite
And for to ben a wyfe, he yaue me leue
Of indulgence, so it be not to repreue
To wedde me, if that my make dye
Without exception of bygamye
All were it good no woman for to touche
He ment as in his bedde or in his couche
For perils is, both fire and towe to assemble
Ye know what this ensample may resemble
This is al and some, he held virginite
More parfyte than wedding in freelte.
Freelte clepe I, but if that he and she
Wolde lede their life all in chastite
I graunt it well, I haue none envye
Though maydenhede preferre bygamye
It liketh hem to be clene in body and goste
Of myne estate I wol make no boste
For well ye knowe, a lord in his houshold
Hath nat euery vessell all of golde
Some ben of tre, and don their lordes seruice
God clepeth folke to hym in sondry wise
And euerych hath of god a proper gyfte
Some this, some that, as him liketh shifte
Virginite is great perfection
And continence eke with deuocion
But Christe, that of perfection is well
Badde not euery wyght he shoulde go sell
All that he had, and giue it to the poore
And in suche wyse folowe hym and his fore
He spake to hem, that woulde liue parfitly
And lordinges (by your leaue) that am nat I
I wol bestowe the floure of al myn age
In the actes and fruite of mariage
Telle me also, to what conclucion
Were membres made of generacione
And of so parfite wise a wight ywrought
Trusteth wel, they were nat made for nought
Glose who so wol, and saye vp and doun
That they were made for purgacion
Of vrine, and other thinges smale
And eke to knowe a female from a male
And for non other cause, what say ye no
The experience wotte wel it is not so
So that the clerkes be not with me wrothe
I say that they were maked for bothe
This is to sayn, for office and for ease
Of engendrure, there we not god displease
Why shoulde men elis in their bokes serve
That man shulde yelde to his wife her dette
Now wherwith shuld he pay his payment
If he ne vsed his sely instrument
Than were they made vpon a creature
To purge vrine, and eke for engendrure
But I say not that euery wyght is holde
That hath suche harneis, as I to you tolde
To go and vsen hem in engendrure
Than shoulde men take of chastyte no cure
Christ was a mayde, and shapen as a man
And many a sainte, sithen the worlde began
Yet lived they eurt in parfite chastyte
I nyll enuye no virginite
Let hem with breed of pure whete be fedde
And let vs wives eate barly breedde
And yet with barly bred, Marke tell can
Our lorde Jesu refreshed many a man
In suche a state as god hath cleped vs
I wol persever, I nam not precious
In wifehode wol I vse myn instrument
As frely as my maker hath it sent
If I be daungerous, god yeue me for ow
Myn husbond shal it haue both euen & morow
When that him lyst come forth & pay his det
In husbonde wol I haue I wol not let
Which shalbe both my dettour & my thral
And haue his tribulacion with all
Upon his flesshe, while that I am his wyfe
I haue the power during al my lyfe
Upon his proper body, and nat he
Right thus the apostle tolde it to me
And bad our husbondes for to loue vs well
Al this sentence me lyketh euery dell.
Up stert the Pardoner, and that anon
Now dame quod he, by god & by seint John
Ye ben a noble prechour in this caas
I was about to wedde a wyfe, alas
What, shoulde I bye it on my flesshe so dere
Yet had I leuer wedde no wife to yere
Abyde qd she, my tale is not begon
Nay, thou shalte drinke of another ton
Er that I go, shal sauer worse then ale
And when that I haue told forth my tale
Of tribulacion that is in mariage
Of whiche I am expert in al myn age
This is to say, myself hath ben the whippe
Than maist thou chese whether thou wolt stippe
Of thilke toune, that I shal telle afroche

Beware

Beware of it, er thou to nere approche
For I shall tell ensamples mo than ten
Who so wol not beware by other men
By him shal other men corrected be
These same wordes writeth Pholome
Reche in his almageste, and take it there.
Dame I wol pray you, if your wil were
Say this pardoner, as ye began
Tel forth your tale, spareth for no man
And teche us yong men of your practike
Gladly (quod she) if it may you lyke
But that I pray to all this company
If that I spelke after my fantasy
As taketh not a grefe of that I say
For myne entent is not but to play
Now sire, than shal I tel forth my tale
As euer mote I drinke wyne or ale
I shal say soth. Tho husbondes that I had
Thre of hem were good, and two were bad
The thre good men were riche and olde
Unethes myght they the statute holde
In which they were bounden vnto me
Ye wot well what I meane of this parde
As god me helpe, I laugh whan I thynke
How pitously a night I made hem to swinke
But by my fay, I tolde of it no store
They had me yeue her londe and her tresore
Me neded no lenger to do diligence
To wynne her loue, and do hem reuerence
They loued me so wel by god aboue
That I ne tolde no deynte of her loue
A wyse woman wol busy her euer in one
To get her loue, there as she hath none
But sothen I had hem holly in myn honde
And that they had geue me all her londe
What, shuld I take kepe hem for to please
But if it were for my profite and myn ease
I set hem so a worke by my faye
That many a night they songen wel a waye
The bacon was not fet for hem I trowe
That some me haue in Essex at Dunmowe
I gouerned hem so wel after my lawe
That eche of hem full blysful was and fawe
To bringe me gay thinges fro the fayre
They were ful fain whan I spake hem faire
For god it wot, I chidde hem spitously
Now herkeneth how I bere me properly.
Ye wyse wyues that can vnderstonde
Thus shul ye speke, and bere hem on honde
For halfe so boldly there can no man
Swere and lye, as a woman can
I say not this by wyues that ben wise
But if it be, whan they hem selfe auise
A wyse wife shall, if that she can her good
Bere hem in honde the crowe is wode
And take witnesse of her owne mayde
Of her assent: but herkeneth howe I sayde.
Sir olde kepmarde, is this thyn aray
Why is myne neighbours wife so gay
She is honoured ouer all where she gothe
I sitte at home, and haue no thrifty clothe
What dost thou at myn neighbours house
Is she so fayre art thou so amorous
What rowne st thou so out of our mayde benedicite
Sir olde lechour, let thy iapes be
And yf I haue a gossip or a frende
(without gylte) thou chidest as a fende
If that I walke or play vnto his house
Thou comest home as dronken as a mouse
And prechest on thy benche with yuell preste
Thou sayst to me, it is a great mischefe
To wedde a poure woman for costage
And if that she be riche of high parage
Than sayst thou, it is a very tourmentry
To suffer her pride and her melancoly
And if that she be fayre, thou verey knaue
Thou sayst that euery holour wol her haue
She may no whyle in chastite abyde
That is assayled on euery syde
Thou sayst some folke desiren vs for richesse
Some for our shape, and some for our fairnesse
And some, for she can either sing or daunce
And some for gentylnesse or for daliaunce
Some for her hondes and her armes smale
Thus goth all to the deuyl by thy tale.
Thou sayst men may not kepe a castel wall
It may so longe assayled be ouer all
And yf that she be foule, thou sayst that she
Coueth euery man that she may se
For as a spanyell, she wol on hem lepe
Tyl that she fynde some man yͭ wol her chepe
Ne non so gray goose goth there in the lake
(As sayst thou) wol ben without her make
And sayst, it is a harde thing for to welde
A wight, that no man wol his thonke helde
Thus sayst thou lorel, when yͭ gost to bedde
That no wise man needeth for to wedde
Ne no man that entendeth vnto heuyn
With wilde thunder dint and fire iruyn
Wyte thy wicked necke be to broke.
Thou sayst, droppyng houses, and eke smoke
And chidyng wyues, maken men to flee
Out of her owne house, ah, benedicite
What ayleth suche an olde man for to chyde
Thou sayst, we wyues wol our vices hide
Tyll we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe

Thou

Wel may this be a prouerbe of a shrewe
Thou sayst, ꝑ oxen, hors, asses, & hyndes
They ben assayd at diuers stondes
Basins, lauers, er thou men hem bye
Spones, stoles, and all suche husbondrye
And so be pottes, clothes, and arayes
But folke of wyues maken non assayes
Tyll they ben wedded, olde dotarde shrewe
And sayst, how we wol thau our vices shewe
Thou sayest also, that it displeaseth me
But if that thou wylt prayse my beaute
And but thou poke alway on my face
And clepe me fayre dame in euery place
And but thou make a feeste on that like day
That I was borne, & make me freshe & gay
And but thou done to my norrice honour
And to my chamber wich in my bour
And to my fathers folke, and bys alyes
Thus sayest thou olde barel full of lyes.
And yet of our prentise Jenkyn
For bys crispe heer, shynyng as golde fine
And for he squireth me bothe vp and down.
Hast thou caught a false suspection
I wol him nat, tho thou were ded to morow.
But tell me thys, why hidest thou ib sorow
The keyes of thy chest awaye fro me
It is my good as wel as thyn parde
What, wenest ꝑ make an ydiot of our dame
Nowe by that lord that called is saynt Jame
Thou shalt nat both though thou wer wood
Be master of my body and of my good
That one ꝑ shalt forgon maugre thyn eyen
What helpeth it of me to enquere and spien
I trowe thou wouldest locke me in thy chyste
Thou shouldest say: wife, go where you lyst
Take your disporte, I wol leue no tales
I knowe you for a trewe wife dame Ales
For loue no man, that taketh kepe or charge
Where that we go, we wol be at our large.
Of all men ydlessed mote he be
The wyse astrologien dan Ptholeme
That sayeth this prouerbe in his almagest
Of all men his wisdome is the best
That recketh not who hath the world in hōde
By thys prouerbe thou shalt vnderstande
Haue thou ynowe, what dare ꝑ recke or care
Nowe merely that other folke fare
For certes, olde dotarde by your leue
Ye shall haue queynt ynowe at eue
He is to great a nygarde that wolle werne
A man, to lyght a candle at bys lanterne
He shal haue neuer the lesse lyght parde
Haue thou ynowe, thou darst not playn the:
Thou saiest also, that if we make vs gay
With clothes, or with precious array
That it is peryl of our chastite
And yet with sorow, thou must enforce the
And say these wordes in the Apostles name
In habite made with chastite and shame
Ye women shuld apparayle you (qd he)
And nat in tresses heer, and gay perre
As perles, ne with golde, ne clothes riche
After the text, ne after thy rubriche
I nyll not worche as moche as a gnatte.
Thou sayest also, I was lyke a catte
But who so wolde senge the cattes skynne
Than wolde the catte dwellen in his inne
And if the cattes skyn be slicke and gay
She nyll nat dwel in house halfe a day
But forth she wol or any day bidawed
To shewe her skyn, and gon a caterwawed.
Thus thou sayest, if I be gay sir shrewe
I wol renne out, my borell for to shrewe
Fy olde fole, what helpeth the to spyen
For though thou pray Argus with his eyen
To be my wardcorps, as he can best
In faith he shal nat kepe me but me lest
Yet couth I make his berde, so mote I the
Thou sayest eke, ꝑ there ben thinges three
The which troublen all this erthe
And that no wight may endure the ferth
O, lefe sir shrewe, Jesu shorte thy lyfe
Yet prey'st thou, & saiest: an hateful wife
I reckened, for one of these myschaunces
Ben there non other resemblaunces
That ye may lyken your parables to
But if a fely wife be one of tho.
Thou lykenest eke, womens loue to hell
To barayn lond, there water may not dwell
Thou lykenest it also to wylde fyre
The more it brenneth, the more it hath desire
To consume any thyng that brent wolde be.
Thou saist, right as wormes shenden a tre
Right so a wife destroyeth her husbonde
This knowen they that ben to wiues bonde.
Lordinges, right thus as ye haue vnderstond
Bare I stifely myn olde husbande on honde
That thus they sayden in her dronkenesse
And all was false, but as I took witnesse
Of Jenkyn, and of my nece also
O lorde the payne I dyd hem, and the wo
Ful giltles by goddes swete pyne
For as an horse, I couthe both bite & whyne
I couth playn, though I were in the gilte
Or els often tyme I had ben spylte
Who so first to myl cometh, first grynt

I playned

I playned first, and so was our ware isyne
They were full glad to excusen hem bilue
Of thynge, that they a gylte neuer in her liue
Of wenches wolde I bere hem on honde
whan ꝑ for sick, vnnethes might they stonde
yet rickled I his herte, for that he
grende I had of hym so great cheerte
I swore, that all my walkyng out by nyght
was for to espye wenches, that he dyght
vnder that colour had I muche myrthe
for all suche witte, is gyuen vs in our byrthe
Deceite, weppyng, spynning, god hath gyue
To women, kyndly whyle that they lyue
And thus of o thing I may auaunt me
At thende I had the best in eche degre
By slight or force, or by some maner thing
As by contynuall murmure or grutchyng
Namely a bedde had they mischaunce
There woulde I chide, and don no pleasaunce
I wolde no lenger in the bedde abyde
(yf I felt his arme ouer my syde)
Till he had made hys raunsom vnto me
Than woulde I suffer hym to do hys nyeete
And therfore, euery man thys tale I tell
wyue who so may, all ben for to sell
with empty hondes men may no haukes lure
for wynning wolde I all hys lust endure
And make me than a fayned appetite.
And yet in bacon had I neuer delite
That maked me euer ꝑ I would ... chide
for thoughe the pope had sitten hem beside
I wolde not spare hem at her owne boorde
For be my trouth I quit hem word for worde
As helpe me verey god omnipotent
Tho I right now shulde make my testament
I ne owe hem a worde, but it is quitte
I brought it so about by my witte
That they must gyue it vp, as for the best
Or elis had we neuer ben in rest
for though he loked as wode as a lyon
yet should he fayle of hys conclusion.
Than woulde I saye, good lefe take kepe
how mekely loketh wyllken our shepe
Come nere my spouse, and let me kysse your cheke
ye shoulde be all patient and meke
And haue a swete spiced conscience
Sithe ye so preche of Jobs pacience
Suffreth alway, sith ye so wel can preche
And but if ye do, we shall you teche
That it is fayre to haue a wyfe in pees
One of vs two must obeyen doutles
And sithe a man is more reasonable
Than a woman is, ye must ben sufferable
What ayleth you to grutche thus and grone
Is it for ye woulde haue me queynt alone
Why take it all. lo, haue it euery dell
Peter I shrewe you, but ye loue it well.
For if I woulde sel my belchose
I couth walke as frethe as any rose
But I will kepe it for your owne forth
ye be to blame by god, I say you forth
Suche maner wordes had we on honde
Now will I speke of my fourth husbonde.
My fourth husbonde was a reuelour
This is to say, he had a paramour
And I was yonge and ful of ragery
Stubburne and stronge, and ioly as a pye
Well coude I daunce, to an harpe smale
And sing ywis as a nyghtingale
When I had dronken a draught of swete wine
Metellius, the foule churle the swine
That with a staffe byraft his wife her life
for she dronk wine: though I had be his wife
Ne shulde he not haue daunted me fro drinke
And after wyne of Venus must I thinke
for also seker, as colde engendreth hayle
A lycorous mouth must haue a lecherous taile
In women vinolent is no defence
This know lecherous by experyence.
But lorde Christ, when it remembreth me
Upon my youth, and my iolyte
It tickleth me about the herte rote
Unto thys day it dothe my herte bote
That I haue had my worlde, as in my tyme
But age alas, that all will enuenyme
Hath me byraft my beaute, and my pith
Lette go farewell, the deuil go therwith
The floure is gon, ther nis no more to tel
The bran (as I best can) nowe more I sel
But yet to be right mery will I fonde
Now forth to tell of my fourth husbonde,
I say I had in herte great despite
That he of any other had delite
But he was quit, by god and saynt Joce
I made hym of the same wode a croce
Not of my body in no foule manere
But certaynly, I made folke suche chere
That in hys owne grece I made hym fry
for anger, and for verey ielousy
By god, in erthe I was his purgatory
for whiche I hope hys soule be in glory
for god it wote, he sate ful oft and songe
When that his shoe ful bitterly hym wronge
There was non, saue god & he, that wist
In many wise, howe sore that I hym twist
He dyed when I came fro Hierusalem

And

And lieth in graue vnder the Rode beem
Al wys his tombe so curious
As was the sepulture of hym Darius
Whiche that Appelles wrought so subtelly
It is but wast to bury hym preciously
Let him fare wel, god giue his soule good rest
He is nowe in hys graue and in his chest.
¶ Nowe of my fyfth husbonde will I tell
God lette neuer his soule come in hell
And yet was he to me the moste shrewe
That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe
And euer shal, vnto myn endyng day
But in our bedde he was so fresshe and gay
And therwithall, he couth so wel me glose
When that he wolde haue my bele chose
That though he had me bete on euery bone
He couthe winne ayen my loue anone
I trowe I loued hym the better, for that he
Was of hys loue so daungerous to me
We women haue, if that I shal not lye
In this matere, a queynte fantasy
Wayte what thinge we may not lightly haue
Therafter wol we al day crye and craue
Forbyd vs thing, and that desiren we
Prese on fast, and than wol we fle
With daunger hetten we all our chaffare
Great prees at market maketh dereware
And too great chepe is holde at too litel price
This knoweth euery woman that is wise.
¶ My fifth husbonde, god his soule blesse
Whiche I toke for loue and no rychesse
He some tyme was a clerke in Oxenforde
And had left scole, a went at home to borde
With my gossip, dwellyng in our town
God haue her soule, her name was Alysoun
She knewe my hert, and eke my priuite
Better than our parisshe preest so mote I the
To her bewrayed I my counsell all
For had my husbonde pist against the wall
Or don a thyng, that sholde haue cost his lyfe
To her, and to another worthy wyfe
And to my nece, whiche that I loued well
I would haue told his conisaunce euery dell
And so I dyd ful often god it wote
That made hys face ful oft red and hote
For very shame, and blamed hym oft, for he
Had told to me so great a priuite.
¶ And so befyll, that onys in a lent
So often tyme I to my gossyp went
For euer yet I loued to go gay
And for to walke in Marche, Apryl, and May
Fro house to house, to harken sondry tales
That Jenkyn clerke, & my gossyp dame Ales
And I my self, into the feldes went
My husbonde was at London all that lent
I had the better layser for to play
And for to se, and eke for to be sey
Of lusty folke, what wyst I where my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place
Therfore to daunces wil I my visitacions
To digiles, and to processions
To prechyng eke, and to pilgrymages
To playes of myracles, and to maryages
And wered on my gay scarlet gytes
These wormes, these mothes, nor these mites
Upon my peryl frette hem neuer a dell (ne)
And wost thou why? for they were vsed wel
Nowe wol I tel forth what happed me
I say, that in the feldes walked we
Tyl trewly we had such daliaunce
This clerke and I, that of my purueyaunce
I spake to hym, and sayd howe that he
If I were wedowe, sholde wedde me
For certaynly, I say for no bostaunce
Yet was I neuer without purueyaunce
Of maryage, ne of other thinges eke
I holde a mouses witte not worthe a leke
That hath but one hole to sterten to
And if that fayle, than is all vdo.
I bare him on hande he had enchaunted me
My dame taught me forsoth that subtylte
And eke I sayd, I mette of him all nyght
He wolde a fayne me, as I laye vpryght
And all my bedde was full of very blood
But yet I hope truely he shal do me good
For blode betokeneth gold, as I was taught
And al was fals, I dremed of him right naught
But as I folowed ay my dames lore
As wel of that, as of other thynges more.
But nowe sir lete me se, what shall I saye
A ha, by god I haue my tale agayne
When that my fourth husbōde was on bere
I wept algate, and made sorye chere
As wyues moten, for it is vsage
And with my kerchefe couered my visage
But for that I was purueyed of a make
I wept but small, and that I vndertake
To church was my husbōde borne on morow
With neighbours that for hym made sorow
And Jenkyn our clerke was one of tho
As helpe me god, whan that I sawe him go
After the bere, me thought he had a payre
Of legges and of fete, so clene and so fayre
That all my hert I yaue vnto his holde
He was I trowe, twenty wynter olde
And I was fourty, yf that I shall say sothe

But

yat yet I had alway a colles tothe
Gaprothed I was, & that bycame me wele
I had the p̄ynce of dame Venus stele
Is helpe me god, I was a lusty one
And fayre, riche, & yong, and wel bygone
And truely, as myne husbonde tolde me
I had the best quey̆ne that myght be
For certes I am all fulfy Venerian
In feryng, and my herte is Marcian
Venus me yaue my lust & my lycorousnesse
And Mars yaue me my sturdy hardynesse
Myn ascendent was Taure, & Mars therin
Alas alas, that euer loue was syn
I folowed aye myne inclynacyon
By vertue of my constellacion
That made me I couthe not withdrawe
My chambre of Venus from a good felawe
Yet haue I Martes marke vpon my face
And also in a nother p̄yuy place
For god so wysly be my saluacion
I loued neuer by no discrecion
But euer folowed myne appetyte
Al were he shorte, longe, blacke, or whyte
I toke no kepe, so that he lyked me
How pore he was, ne eke of what degre.
What shuld I saye, but at ye monethes ende
This ioly clerke Jenkin, that was so hende
Hath wedded me with great solempnyte
And to him yaue I al the londe and fe
That euer was geuen me here byfore
But afterwarde repented me ful sore
He nolde suffre nothyng of my lyst
By god he smote me ones with his fyst
For that I rent out of his boke a leef
That of that strok, my eres wex al deef
Stubborne I was, as is a lyonesse
And of my tonge a verray langlyeresse
And walke I wold, as I had done byfore
From house to house, al thoug he had it sworne
For which ful ofte tyme wolde he preche
And me of old Romayn gestes teche
How he Sulpicius Gallus lefte his wyfe
And her forsoke tenne of his lyfe
Not but for open hed he her sey
Lokyng out at his doze on a dey.
Another Romayn tolde he me by name
That for his wyfe was at a somer game
Without his weting, he forsoke her eke
And than wold he vpon his Bible seke
That yike p̄uerbe of Ecclesiaste
Where he comaundeth, & forbyddeth faste
Man shal not suffre his wife go royle about
Than wolde he say right thus out of dout
Who so buyldeth his house all of salowes
And pyrketh his blind horse ouer ye falowes
And suffreth his wyfe for to seche hallowes
He is worthye to be hanged on the gallowes
But al for nought, I set not an hawe
Of his p̄uerbes, ne of his olde sawe
Ne I wold not of him corrected be
I hate him that my vices telleth me
And so do mo (god wot) than I
This made him wood with me al vtterly
I nolde not forbere him in no caas
Now wol I say you forth by S. Thomas
Why that I rent out of his boke a leef
For which he smote me, that I was deef
He had a boke, that gladly myght and day
For his disporte, he wolde rede alway
He cleped it Valery, and Theophrast
At whiche boke he lough alway full fast
And eke ther was a clerke somtime at Rome
A cardynall, that hight saint Jerome
That made a boke ayenst Jouinian
In which boke there was eke Tertulyan
Crisyppus, Trotula, and Helowys
That was abbesse nat ferre fro Parys
And eke the parables of Salomon
Ouides art, and bokes many one
And all these were bounden in on volume
And euery myght and day was his custume
(Whan he had leyser and vacatioun
From other worldly occupatioun)
To reden in this boke of wicked wyues
He knewe of hem mo legendes and lyues
Than ben of good women in the Byble
For truely wel, it is an impossyble
That any clerke wold speke good of wyues
But if it ben of holy sayntes lyues
Ne of non other woman neuer the mo
Who peynted the lyon, tel me who.
By god, if women had writen stories
As clerkes han, within her oratories (nesse
They wold haue writte of me more wicked-
Than all the marke of Adam may redresse
The childre of Mercury and Venus
Ben in her workyng full contrarious
Mercury loueth wysedom and science
And Venus loueth riot and dispence
And for her dyuers disposition
Eche falleth in others exaltation
And thus god wot, Mercury is desolate
In Pisces, where Venus is exaltate
And Venus falleth wher Mercury is reised
Therfore no woman of no clerke is preysed
The clerke whan he is old, & may nought do

Of Uenus werkes, not worthe his olde shoe
Than fyrre he down, and wyt in his dotage
That women can nat kepe her mariage
But now to purpose, why I tolde the
That I was beten for a bone parde
Upon a nyght Jenken, that was our sire
Redde vpon his boke, as he sate by the fyre
Of Eue first, that for her wickednesse
Was al mankynd brought to wretchednesse
For which ye Jesu Christ him selfe was slayn
That bought vs with his herte blode agayn
Lo here expresse of women may ye fynde
That woman was the losse of all mankynde
Tho rad he me how Salomon lost his wyues
Sleping, his leman cut hem with her knyues
Thorow which treason lost he both his eyen
Tho rad he me, if that I shall not lyen
Of Hercules, and of his Dianyre
That caused him to set him selfe a fire
Nothyng forgat he the care and the wo
That Socrates had with his wiues two
How that Xantippe cast pysse on his hed
This sely man sat styl, as he were ded
He wyped his hed, no more durst he sain
But er the thonder stynte there cometh rayn
Of Pasiphae, that was quene of Crete
For shrewednesse him thought that tale swete
Fye, spake no more, it is a grisely thyng
Of her horrible lust and her lykyng
Of Clytemnestra for her lechery
That falsely made her husbande for to dye
He rad it with well good deuocion
He tolde me eke, for what occasyon
Amphioraus at Thebes lost his lyfe
My husbonde had a legende of his wyfe
Eriphilem that for an ouche of golde
Hath prively vnto the grekes tolde
Where that her husbonde hyd him in a place
For which he had at Thebes sory grace
Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucy
They both made her husbondes for to dye
That one for loue, that other was for hate
Lyma her husbonde on an euyn late
Empoysoned had, for that she was his foe
Lucia lykerous loued her husbonde so
That for he shuld alway vpon her thynke
She gaue him suche a loue maner drinke
That he was ded, er it were morowe
And thus algates husbondes han sorowe
Than tolde he me, how one Latumeus
Complayned to his felowe Arius
That in his garden growed suche a tree
On which (he said) that his wyues three
Hanged hem selfe for hertes despitous
O lefe brother (qd this Arius)
Yeue me a plant of this blyssful tree
And in my garden planted shall it be.
Of later date of wyues hathe he redde
That some han slayn her husbondes in bedde
And let her lechour dight hem all the nyght
Whiles that the corse lay in floze vpright
And some had dryue nayles in her brayn
Whiles they slepe, and thus they haue hem slain
Some haue yeue hem poyson in her drinke
He spake more harme than herte may thynke
And therwithal he knewe mo prouerbes
Than in this world there growth grasse or herbes
Bet is (qd he) thyne habitacion
Be with a lyon, or a foule dragon
Than with a woman vsyng for to chyde
Bet is (qd he) hygh in the rose to abyde
Than with an angry wife down in an hous
They ben so wicked and so contrarious
They hate, that they husbondes loue ay
He sayd, a woman cast her shame away
Whan she cast of her smocke: and farther mo
A faire woman, but she be chaste also
Is lyke a golde ryng on a sowes nose
Who coude wene, or who could suppose
The wo, that in myne herte was and pyne
And whan I sawe he wolde neuer fyne
To reden on this cursed boke al nyght
All sodaynly three leues haue I plyght
Out of his boke, right as he radde, and eke
I with my fyst so toke him on the cheke
That in the fire he fel backwarde a doun
And vp he sterte, as doth a wode lyoun
And with his fyst he smote me on myne hed
That in the floze I lay as I were ded
And whan he sey how styl that I lay
He was agast, and wold haue fled away
Tyl at the last out of my swoun I brayde
Oh, hast thou slayn me falsse thefe I sayde
For my londe thus hast thou murdred me?
Er I be ded, yet wol I ones kysse the
And nere he came, and kneled faire a doun
And said: dere suster, swete Alysoun
As helpe me god I shall the neuer smyte
That I haue don it is thy selfe to wyte
Forgeue it me, and that I the beseke
And yet eft sones I bytte him on the cheke
And said: thefe, thus moche am I bewreke
Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke.
But at the last, with mokel care and wo
We fel accorded within our seluen two
He yaf me all the bridell in myne honde

To

To haue the gouernaunce of house & londe
And of his tonge, and of his honde also
And made him bicome his bonde anon tho
And when I had gotten unto me
By maistrie, all the souereynte
Thanne he said: myne owene trewe wyfe
Do as thou lyst, the terme of all thy lyfe
Kepe thyne honour, and eke myne estate
After that day we had neuer debate
God helpe me so, I was to him as kynde
As any wyfe fro Denmarke unto Inde
And also trewe, and so was he to me
I pray to god, that sitte in maieste
So bisse his soule, for his mercy dere
Now wol I say my tale if ye wol here.
¶ The frere lough whan he had herd al this
Now dame (qd he) so haue I ioy or blys
This is a long preamble of a tale
And whan the Sompnour herd the frere gale
Lo (qd this sompnour) by goddes armes two
A frere wol entermete him euermo
Lo good men, a fye and eke a frere
Wol fail in euery dyshe and eke matere
What spekest thou of preambulacion?
What amble or trot, ether peace or sit a doun
Thou letterst our disporte in this matere.
Ye wolt the so sir sompner (qd the Frere)
Now by my fay I shal, er that I go
Tell of a Sompnour, suche a tale or two
That al the folke shall laugh in this place.
Now elles frere I beshrewe thy face
(Quod this sompnour) & I beshrewe me
But if I tell tales two or three
Of freres, er I come to Sittyngburne
That shal make thyne herte for to murne
For wel I wot thy pacyence is goon.
¶ Our host cried peace, and that anoon
And said: let the woman tel her tale
Ye faren as folke, that dronken ben of ale
Do dame, tel forth your tale, & that is best
Al redy sir (quod she) right as you lest
If I haue licence of this worthy frere
Yes dame, tel forth your tale, I wol it here.

Here endeth the wyfe of Bathes prologue, and here begynneth her tale.

In the olde dayes of king Arroure
(Of which the Britons speken great honour)
All was this lond fulfilled of fayry
The Elfe quene, with her ioly company
Daunsed ful oft in many a grene mede
This was the olde opinion as I rede
I speke of many an hundred yere a go
But now can no man se none elfes mo
For now the great charite and prayers
Of lymytours and other holy freres
That serchen euery lande and euery streme
As thicke as motes in the sonne beme
Blissing halles, chambres, kichens, & bowres
Cyties, borowes, castelles, and hye toures
Thropes, bernes, shepens, and dayries
This maketh, that there ben no fayries
For there as wont to walke was an elfe
There walketh now the lymitour him selfe
In vndermeles, and in morwynges
And saith his matyns, & his holy thynges
As he goth in his lymitacioun
Women may go safely by and doun
In euery bushe, and vnder euery tre
There nys none other incubus but he
And he ne wil done hem no dishonour.
¶ And so fell it, that this kyng Arrour
Had in his house a lusty bacheler
That on a day come ridyng fro the ryuer
And happed, that alone as he was borne
He saw a mayde walkyng him beforne
Of which maide anon, maugre her hede
(By very force) he bereft her maydenhede
For which oppression was such clamour
And such pursute vnto kynge Arrour
That dampned was this knight to be deed
By course of lawe, & shuld haue lost his heed
Peraduenture such was the statute tho
But that the quene, and other ladyes mo
So long prayden the kyng of grace
Tyl he his lyfe graunted in that place
And yaue him to the quene, al at her wyll
To chese whether she wold him saue or spill
The quene thanketh the king with all her might
And after this, thus spake she to the knight
Whan she sey her time on a day.
¶ Thou standest yet (qd she) in such aray
That of thy lyfe yet hast thou no sure:te
I graunt the thy lyfe, if that thou can tel me
What thyng is it, that women most desyren

Be ware, and kepe thy me the home from yen
And if thou canst not tell it me anon
Yet woll I yeue the leue for to gon
A twelue moneth and a day, to lerne and lere
An answere sufficient in this matere
And surelie woll I haue, er that thou passe
Thy body for to yelde in this place.
¶ Wo was ꝑ knight, & sorowfully he sighth
But what, he may not do al as him lyketh
And at last he ches him for to wende
And come ayen, right at the yeres ende
With such answer, as god wold him purueye
And taketh his leue, & wendeth forth his weye
He seketh euery house and euery place
Where as he hopeth for to fynde grace
To lerne, what thing women louen most
But he ne couth aryuen in no coost
Where as he might fynde in this matere
Two creatures accordyng yfere
Some said, women loued best richesse
Some sayd honour, some said iolynesse
Some said riche aray, some said lust a bed
And ofte tyme to ben wydowe and wed
Some said, that our herte is most y eled
Whan that we ben flatered and ꝑ plesed
He gothe ful nye the sothe, I woll not lye
A man shal wynne vs best with flatery e
And with attendaunce, and with busynesse
Ben we ylymed both more and lesse.
And some men sayn, how ꝑ we louen best
For to ben fre, and do right as vs lest
And that no man repreue vs of our vice
But say that we be wise, & nothing nice
For trewly there vys none of vs all
If any wight wol clawe vs on the gall
That we nyl kyke, for that he sayth vs sothe
Assaye, and he shall fynde it, that so dothe
For be we neuer so vicious within
We woll be holden wise and clene of syn.
And some men sain, ꝑ great delyte haue we
For to ben holde stable and eke free
And in o purpose stedfastly to dwell
And nat be wery thing that men vs tell
But that tale is not worth a rake stele
Parde we women can nothyng hele
Witnesse of Midas, woll ye here the tale?
¶ Ouide, among other thinges smale
Said, Midas had vnder his long heeres
Growing on his heed, two asses eeres
The which vice he hidde, as he best myght
Ful subtelly from euery mannes syght
That saue his wife, there wiste of it no mo
He loued her most, and trusted her also
Ye ꝓyed her, that to no creature
She nolde telle of his disfygure.
She swore him, nay for al ꝑ world to win
She nolde do that villany, or that syn
To make her husbonde haue so foule a name
She nold nat tell it for her owne shame
But nathelesse, her thought that she dyde
That she so longe shuld a counsayle hyde
Her thought it swelle so sore about her hert
That nedely some word she must a sterte
And sith she durst tellen it to no man
Down to a mareis fast by she ran
Til she came there, her herte was on a fyre
And as a bitoure bumbeth in the myre
She layd her mouth vnto the water adowne
Wreygh me not thou water with thy soune
Quod she, to the I tell it, and to no mo
My husbonde hath long asses eres two
Now is myn herte al hole, now it is out
I myght no lenger kepe it out of dout.
Here mowe ye se, though we a tyme abyde
Yet out it mote, we can no counsayle hyde
The remenaunt of the tale, if ye will here
Redeth Ouide, and there ye may it lere.
¶ This knight, of which my tale is specially
Whan that he saw, he myght nat come thereby
This is to say, what women louen moste
Within his herte ful sorowful was his goste
But home he goth, he myght nat sojourne
The day was come, he must home returne
And in his way, it happed him to ride
In al his care, under a forest syde
Where he saw vpon a daunce go
Of ladyes foure and twenty, and yet mo
Toward the daunce, he drowe him, ꝑ yerne
In hope that some wysdome shulde he lerne
But certeynly, er that he came fully there
Vanished was the daunce, he wyst not where
No creature saw he that bare lyfe
Save in ꝑ grene, he saw sitting an olde wife
A fouler wight there may no man deuyse
Ageine the knight the olde wife gan arise
And said: sir knight, here forth lyeth no way
Tel me what ye seken by your fay
Paraduenture it may the better be
This olde folke conne muche thinge (qd she)
¶ My leefe mother (qd this knight) certayne
I nam but deed, but if that I can saine
What thing it is, that women most desyre
Could ye me wisse, I wold quite wel your hire
Plight me thy trouth here in my hand (qd she)
The nexte thing that I require of the
Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy myght

And

And I wol tel it you, or it be nyght.
Graunt here my trouth (qd ỳ knyzt) I graūt
(Than quod she, I may me wel auaunt
Thy lyfe is safe, for I wol stonde therby
Upon my lyfe, the queue wyl say as I
Let se, which is the pzondest of hem all
That weareth on a kerchefe or a call
That dare say nay, of that I shall you teche
Let vs go forth without lenger speche.
Tho rowned she a pistel in his ere
And bad him to be glad, and haue no fere.
(Whā they ben comē to ỳ court, this knyzt
Said he had hold his day, as he had hight
And redy was his answerre, as he sayde
Ful many a noble wife, and many a mayde
And many a wydow, for that they be wyse
(The quene her selfe, sittyng as a iustyce)
Assembled ben, his answere for to herre
And afterward this knight was bode apere
To euery wight comaunded was silence
And that the knyght should tel in audyence
What thing that worldly women loued best
This knight ne stode not styl as doth a best
But to his question anon answerde
With manly voyce, that al the court it herde
My liege lady: generally, quod he
Women desyren to haue souerayntē
As well ouer her husbondes as her loue
And for to ben in maistrye hem aboue
This is your most desire, though ye me kill
Doth as you list, I am here at your wyll.
(In al the court nas there wife ne mayde
Ne widow, that contraried, that he saide
But said, he was worthy han his lyfe
And with ỳ word, vp sterte the olde wyfe
Which ỳ the knight fonde sitting on ỳ grene
Mercy (qd she) my soueraine lady quene
Er that your court depart do me right
I taught this answere vnto this knight
For which he plyght me his trouth there
The first thing I wold of him requere
He wold it do, if it lay in his myght
Before the court than pray I the sir knyght
(Quod she) that thou me take vnto thy wife
For wel thou woste, ỳ I haue kept thy lyfe
If I saye false, say nay vpon thy fay.
(This knight answerd, alas and welaway
I wot ryght wel that such was my behestē
For goddes loue chese a newe requestē
Take al my good, and let my body go.
Nay qd she, than I shrewe vs both two
For though that I be foule, olde, and pore
I nolde for al the metall ne the ore
That vnder yerth is grauē, or lythe aboue
But if I thy wyfe were and thy loue.
(My loue (quod he) nay my dampnacion
Alas that any of my nacion
Shuld euer so foule disparaged be
But al for nought, the ende is this, that he
Cōstrayned was, ỳ nedes muste he her wed
And taketh this olde wife, & goth to bed.
(Now wolden some men say paraunture
That for my negligence, I do no cure
To tellen you the ioye and the array
That at the feest was that yike day.
To the which thing answere shortly I shal
I say there nas no ioy ne feest at al
There nas but heynesse and muche sorowe
For pziuely he wedded her on a morowe
And al day after hydde him as an oule
So wo was him, his wyfe loked so foule.
Gret was ỳ sorow ỳ knyzt had in his thouzt
Whā he was with his wyfe a bedde ybrought
He walweth, and turneth to and fro.
(His olde wife lay smylyng euermo
And said: O dere husbonde, O benedicite
Fareth euery knyght thus as ye?
Is this the lawe of kyng Artours house?
Is euery knight of his so daūgerous?
I am your owne loue, and eke your wife
I am she, which that saued hath your lyfe
And certes yet dyd I neuer you vnryght
Why fare ye thus with me the first nyght
Ye faren lyke a man that had lost his wit
For, what is my gilt? for gods loue tel me it
And it shall be amended if I may.
(Amended (qd this knight) alas nay nay
That wol not ben amended neuer mo
Thou art so lothly, and so olde also
And therto comen of so lowe a kinde
That lytle wōder is thouz I walowe & wride
So wold god (qd he) myn hert wold breste.
Is this (qd she) the cause of your vnreste?
Ye certaynly quod he, no wonder nys.
(Now sir (qd she) I couth amende al thys
If that me lyst, er it were dayes thre
So wel ye myght beare you vnto me.
But for ye speke of such gentylnesse
As is discended out of olde richesse
That therfore shullen ye be gentylmen
Such erogaunce is not worthe an hen.
Lo who that is moste vertuous alway
Pryuy and aperte, and moste entendeth aye
To do the gentyl dedes, that he can
Take him for the greatest gentilman.
Cryst wolde we claimed of hi our gētilnesse

Not of our eldres, for our olde richesse
For though they yeue vs al her heritage
For which we clayme to ben of hie parage
Yet may they not byqueth, for nothing
To none of vs, her vertuous lyuing
That made him gentylmen ycalled be
And bad vs folowen hem in such degre.
Wel can the wise poete of Florence
That hight Daunte, speke in this sentence
Lo in such maner ryme is Dantes tale
Ful selde vp ryseth by his braunches smale
Prowesse of man: for god of his goodnesse
Wol that we clayme of him our gentylnesse
For of our eldres may we nothyng clayme
But temporal thing, that men may hurt & mayme
Eke every wight wot this as wel as I
If gentylnes were planted naturally
Vnto a certayne lynage down the lyne
Prively & apertly, than wold they neuer fyne
To done of gentilnesse the fayre office
They might don no vilany ne vice
Take fyre & beare it into the derkest hous
Bytwixt this and the mount Caucasus
And let men shitte the doores, and go thenne
Yet wol the fyre as fayre lye and brenne
As twenty thousande men might it beholde
His office natural aye wol it holde
Up peryll of my lyfe, tyll that it dye.
Here may ye se well, how that genterye
Is not annexed to possessions
Sythen folke don not her operacions
Alway as doth the fyre, lo in his kynde
For god it wot, men may ful often fynde
A lordes sonne done shame and vilanye
And he that wol have prise of his gentrye
For he was borne of a gentyl house
And had his eldres noble and vertuous
And nyl him selfe don no gentyl dedes
Ne folow his gentyl auncetre that deed is
He nys not gentyl, be he duke or erle
For vilaynes, synful dedes maketh a cherle
For gentilnesse nys but the renomie
Of thine auncetres, for her highe bountie
Which is a strong thing to thy persone
For gentilnesse commeth fro god alone
Than cometh our very gentylnesse of grace
It was nothyng byqueth vs with our place.
Thynketh how noble, as sayth Valerius
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius
That out of pouertie rose to hye noblesse
Redeth Seneck, and redeth eke Boece
There shal ye seen expresse, no drede is
That he is gentyle, that doth gentyle dedes
And therfore dere husbond, I thus conclude
Al were it that myn auncetres were rude
Yet may that hye god, and so hope I
Graunt me grace to lyue vertuously
Than am I gentil, whan I begynne
To lyue vertuously, and leuen synne.
And there as ye of pouertie me repryne
The hye god, on whom that we byleue
In wylful pouerte chese to lede his lyfe
And certes every man, maide, and wyfe
May understonde, Jesu heuen kyng
Ne wolde not chese a vicious lyuing.
Glad pouert is an honest thing certayne
This wol Seneck and other clerkes sayne
Who so wold hold him paide of his pouerte
I holde him riche, al had he not a sherte
He that coueyteth is a ful poore wyght
For he wold han, that is not in his myght
But he that nought hath, ne coueyteth to have
Is rich, although ye hold him but a knave
Very pouert is synne properly
Juuenal sayth of pouert merily
The poore man, whan he goeth by the way
Byfore theues, he may synge and play
Pouert is hatefull good: and as I gesse
A ful great bringer out of busynesse
A great amender eke of sapience
To him that taketh it in pacience
Pouert is, though it seme elenge
Possession, that no wight wol chalenge.
Pouerte ful often, whan a man is lowe
Maketh his god and eke him selfe to knowe.
Pouert a spectacle is, as thinketh me
Through which one may his very frendes se
And therfore, syn that I you not greue
Of my pouert, no more me reprene.
Now sir, eke of olde ye repreued me
And certes sir, though none auctorite
Were in no boke ye gentyls of honour
Saine that men shuld an olde wight honour
And clepe hem father for her gentylnesse
And auctours shal I finde, as I gesse.
Now there as ye sayn, that I am foule & olde
Than drede you not to ben a cokewolde
For filthe, elthe, and foule, also mote I the
Ben great wardeyns vpon chastite
But natheles, syn I know your delyte
I shal fulfyl your worldly appetyte
Chese now (qd she) one of these thinges twey
To have me foule and olde, tyl that I dey
And be to you a trewe humble wife
And neuer you displease in al my lyfe
Or elis wol you have me yong and faire

And

And take youre auenture of the repayre
That shall come to your house, bycause of me
Or in some other place, may well be.
Nowe chese your seluen whether ꝑ you liketh
¶ This knight auiseth him, and sore siketh
But at the laste, he sayd in this maner:
My lady and my loue, and wyfe so dere
I put me in youre wyse gouernaunce
Chese the youre selfe, which may be more plesaunce
And most honour to you & me also
I do no force whether of the two
For as you lyketh, it sufficeth me.
Than haue I gote of you ꝑ maistry (qd she)
Syn I may chese, and gouerne as my lyste
Ye certes wyfe (qd he) I holde it for the beste
Kysse me (qd she) we be no lenger wrothe
For by my troueth, I wyll be to you bothe
This is to say, to be bothe fayre and good
I praye to god that I mote sterue wood
But I to you be also good and trewe
As euer was wyfe, sithen ꝑ world was newe
And but I be to morowe as fayre to sene
As any lady, empresse, or quene
That is betwene Est and eke the weste
Doth with my lyfe right as you leste
Cast vp the courteyn, and loke how it is.
¶ And when this knight sawe all this
That she so fayre was, and so yonge therto
For ioye hent her in his armes two
His herte bathed in the bathe of blysse
A thousande tymes a rowe he gan her kysse
And she obeyed hym in euery thyng
That mought done him pleasure or lykyng
And thus they lyued vnto her lyues ende
In parfite ioye: and Jesu Christ vs sende
Husbondes meke, yong, and freshe a bedde
And grace to ouerlyue hem that we wedde.
And I praye to god, to shorte her lyues
That wyll not be gouerned by her wyues
And olde, and angry nygardes of dispence
God sende hem sone a very pestylence.

¶ Here endeth the wyfe of Bathes tale, and here begynneth the Freres prologue

THys worthye lymytour, thys noble Frere
He made alwaye a maner louryng chere
Upon the Sompner, but for honeste
No bylaynes worde as yet to him spake he
But at the laste, he sayd to the wyfe
Dame, god yeue you right good lyfe
Ye haue touched here, also moote I the
In scole matter, a full great difficulte
Ye haue sayd muche thing right wel I saye
But dame, here as we ryden by the waye
Us nedeth not to speken but of game
And lette auctorities a goddes name
To preching, and to schole of clergye.
But if it lyke vnto thys companye
I wol you of a Sompner tell a game
Yarde ye maye well knowe by the name
That of a Sompner may no good be sayde
I pray, that none of you be yuell apayde
A sompner is a renner vp and doun
With maundementes, for fornicacion
And is ybeate at euery townes ende.
Tho spake our hoste & sayd: sir ye shuld hende
And curteys, as a man of your estate
In this companye we wol no debate
Telleth your tale, and let the Sompner be
Nay (qd the Sompner) let hym say to me
What so him lyste: when it cometh to my lote
By god I shall hym quite euery grote
I shall him tell whiche a greate honour
It is, to be a flatterynge lymytour
And eke of many an other maner crime
Whiche nedeth nat to reherse at thys time
And of his office I shall him tell ywis
Our hoste answerd: peace, no more of this
And afterwarde he sayd vnto the frere
Tel forth your tale, myn owne maister dere.

¶ Here endeth the Freres prologue, and here after followeth his tale.

WYlom there was dwelling in my countre
Archedeken, a man of hye degre
That boldly dyd execucion
In punyshinge of fornication
Of witchecrafte, and eke of baudrye
Of defamacion, and auoutrye
Of churche reues, and of testamentes
Of contractes and lacke of sacramentes
Of blery, and of symony also
But certes lecherours dyd he muche wo
They shoulden synge, yf they weren hent
And smale tythers they were foule shent

If any person wolde vpon hem playne
There might abert hem no pecunial payne
For small sithes, and smale offenge
He made the people pesoubly to synge
For er the bishop caught hem with his hoke
They were in the archedekens boke
And than had he (through his iurdiction)
Power to bone on hem correction
He had a Sompner redy to hys honde
A slyer boye was there non in Englonde
For subtelly he had his espiayle
That taught him where he might anayle
He couthe spare of lechours one or two
To techen hym to foure and twenty mo
For though this sompner wode wer as an hare
To tell his harlotrye I woll not spare
For we ben out of his correction
They haue of vs no iurdiction
As neuer shullen, terme of all her liues.
Peter so ben women of the stewes.
(Qd this Sompner) vput out of our cure.
Peace with mischaūce & with misauenture
Sayd our hoste, and let him tell his tale
Nowe telleth forth & lette the Sompner gale
He spareth not, myn owne maister dere.
This false theke, this sompner (qd the frere)
Had alway baudes redy to his honde
As any hauke to lure, in Englonde
That telleth him al the secre that they knewe
For her aquayntaūce was nat come a newe
They weren hys approuers priuely
He toke him self a great profite therby
His maister knewe not alway what he wan
Without maundement, a leude man
He coude somon, on payne of chrides curse
And they were glad to fyllen his purse
And made him greate fresles at the nale
And ryght as Judas had purses smale
And was a theke: right suche a theke was he
His maister had but halfe his duetye
He was (yf I shall yeue him his laude)
A theke, a sompner, and eke a baude.
He had eke wenches of his retinue
That whether sir Robert, or sir Hue
Or Johan, or Rafe, or who so that it were
That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere
Thus were the wenches and he of one assent
And he wolde fetche a fayned amaundement
And somon hem to the chapiter bothe two
And pill the man, and let the wenche go
Than wold he say, frende I shall for thy sake
Do striken the out of our letters blake
Thou hast no moze as in thys case trauayle
I am thy frende, there I maye the auayle
Certayne he knewe of bribries mo
Than possible is to tell in yeres two
For in this wozlde nys dogge for the bowe
That can an hurt dere from an hole knowe
Ner than the Sompner knewe a sly lechour
Or auoutrer, or eke any paramour
For that was the fruite of all his rente
Therfore on it he sette all his entente.
And so befell that ones on a day
This sompner wayting euer on his pray
Rode for to somon a old wedowe a ryche
Fayning a cause, for he wolde haue a byche
And happed that he sawe before him ryde
A gay yoman vnder a forest syde
A bowe he bare, and arrowes bright & shine
He had vpon him a courtepie of grene
An hatte vpon his hed with stringes blake
Sir qd this sompner, hayle and wel mote
Welcome qd he, and euery good felawe
Whider ridest thou vnder the greue wode shawe
Sayd this yoman, wolte thou ferre to day?
This sompner him answerd, and sayd: nay
Here fast by (qd he) is myn entent
To riden, for to reysen vp a rent
That longeth to my lordes duete.
Art thou than a bayly? ye (qd he)
He durst nat than, for very fyrche and shame
Say that he was a sompner, for the name
Departdieux, qd this yoman lefe brother
Thou art a bayly, and I am another
I am vnknowen, as in this countre
Of thyn aquayntaunce I wol pray the
And eke of brotherhed, if that thou lyst
I haue golde and syluer in my chist
Yf that ye happe to come in our shire
All shall be thyn, right as thou wolte desire
Grauntmercy qd this sompner, by my faithe
Euerliche in other his trouth plighte
For to be swozne brethren, tyll they dey
And with that wozd they riden forth her wey
This sompner with ỳ, was as ful of ligies
As ful of venym, as ben these wariangies
And euer requiring vpon euery thing
Brother qd he, wher is your dwelling
Another day, if that I shulde you seche
This yoman him answerd in softe speche
Brother qd he, ferre in the North contre
Where as I hope sometyme I shall the se
Or we departe, I shall the so well wisse
That of myn house thou shalte neuer misse.
Nowe brother qd the sompner, I you pray
Teche me, while we riden by the way

Sith

Sith that ye ben a bayliff, as am I
Some fatherly, tel me faithfully
In myne office, how I may most wynne
And spareth not for conscience ne for synne
But as my brother, tel me how don ye
Now by my trouth brother dere, sayd he
As I shal tellen the a sorowful tale
My wages ben full streite and smale
My lorde is hard to me and daungerous
And myn office ful laborous
And therfore, by extorcion I leve
Fynde at that sum wol me yeve
Algate by sleyghe or by violence
From yere to yere, I wyn al my dispence
I can no better tellen faithfully
Now certes (qd the sompnour) so fare I
I spare not to take god it wote
But if it be to heuy or to hote
That I may gretten in counsayle prynely
No maner conscience of that I have.
Fere myn extorcion, I might not lyven
Of such japes wol I not be shriven
Stomake ne conscience know I non
I shrewe al these shrifte fathers everychon
Wel be we met by god and swete saint Jame
But trewe brother, tel me thy name
Quod this somner, in thys meane while
This yoman gan a lyte for to smyle
Brother qd he, wotte ꝑ that I the telle
I am a fende, my dwellyng is in helle
And here I ride about my purchasing
To wete where I may get any thyng
My purchase is the fleerce of all my rent
Lok how thou rydest for the same entent
To wyn good, thou reckest never how
Right so fare I, for ride wol I now
Unto the worldes ende for a pray
Ye, qd this somner, benedicite, what ye say
I wende ye were a yoman trewly
Ye have a mannes shappe as well as I
Have ye a figure than determynate
In hel, there ye ben in your estate
Nay certaynly qd he, there have we non
But when us lyketh, we can take us one
Or elles make you seme we ben shape
Somtyme lyke a man or lyke an ape
Or lyke an Angel can I ryde or go
It is no wonder thing though it be so
A lousy jogeler can disceve the
And parde yet can I more craft than he
Why qd ꝑ Sompnour, ryde ye than or gon
In sondry shappe, and not alway in one?
For we qd he, wol us such forme make
Ys moste able ys our prayes for to take
What maketh you to have all this labour
Ful many a cause lefe sir Sompnour
Sayd this fende, but all thyng hath tyme
The day is shorte, and it is passed prime
And yet ne got I nothyng in this day
I wol entende to winning, if that I may
And nat entende our wittes to declare
For brother myne, thy wittes ben all to bare
To understande al, though I wold tel hem the
But for thou askest why labouren we
For sometyme be we goddes instrumentes
And meanes to done his commaundementes
When that him lyste on his creatures
In diuers arte and in diuers figures
Withouten him we have no myght certayn
If that him lyste to stonden there agayn
And sometyme at our prayere have we leve
Only the body, and nought the soule to greve
Witnesse of Job, whom we deden wo
And sometime have we might of bothe two
This is to sayn, of body and soule eke
And sometyme we ben suffred for to seke
Upon a man, and don his soule unrest
And nat his body, and all is for the best
Whan he withstandeth our temptacion
It is a cause of his saluacion
Al be it that it was not oure entent
He shulde be safe, but that we wold him hent
And sometime be we servauntes unto man
As the archebishoppe saynt Dunstan
And to the apostle eke servaunt was I
Yet tell me qd this Sompnour faithfully
Make ye you newe bodies thus alway
Of elementes? the fende answerde nay
Sometyme we fayn, and sometyme we arise
With dede bodies in sondry wise
And speke as reasonably, faire and well
As the Pithonesse did to Samuell
And yet wouldē some men say it was not he
I do no force of your dremes
But o thing I warne the, I wol not jape
Thou wolt algates wete how we be shape
Thou shalt hereafterward (my brother dere)
Come, where the nedeth not of me to lere
For thou shalt by thyne owne experience
Conne in the chaire rede of thys sentence
Better than Vergyll, while he was on lyve
Or Dauid also. Nowe lette us ride blyve
For I wol holde company with the
Tyll it be so that thou forsake me
Nay qd this Sompnour ꝑ shall not betide
I am a yoman knowen full wyde

My

By trouth wolI I holde to ꝑ, as in this caas
For though thou were the deuill Sathanas
My trouth wol I holde to my brother
As I am sworne, and eche of vs to other
For to be trewe brother in this caas
And brother, we gon to our purchaas
Take thou thy parte, what men woll the yeue
And I shall myn, and thus shall we both leue
And if that any of vs haue more than other
Let him be trewe, & parte it with his brother
I graunt qd the deuill, by my fay
And with that worde they riden forth her way
And right at the entrying of the townes ende
(To which the sompner shope him for to wende)
They sawe a carte, that charged was with hay
Whiche that a carter droue forth on his way
Depe was the way, for which the carte stode
This carter smote, & stirred as he wer wode
Heit scot heit brok, what spare ye for ꝑ stones
The fende qd he, you fetche body & bones
As ferforth as euer ye were yfoled
So muche wo as I haue for you tholed
The deuyll haue all, both horse, carte, & hay
Qd this sompner, here shal we haue a pray
And nere the fende he drew, as nought ne were
Full priuely, and rowned in his ere
Herken brother hether, by thy faith
Herest thou what the carter saith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeue it the
Bothe hay and carte, and eke his capies thre
Nay qd the deuill god wotte neuer a dele
It is not his entent trust me wele
Aske him thy selfe, yf thou trowest not me
Or els stynt a while and thou shalte se
This carter thacked his horse on the croupe
And they begon to drawe and to stoupe
Heit nowe qd he, that Jesu Christ you blisse
And al his handy werke, both more and lesse
That was well ywright myn owen liard boy
I pray god saue the and saynte Loy
Nowe is my carte out of the slowe parde.
Lo brother qd the fende, what tolde I the
Here may ye seen myn owne dere brother
The carle spake o thing but he thought another
Lette vs go forthe aboute our viage
Here wyn we nothing vpon carriage
When ꝑ they comen, so what out of the town
This sompner to his brother gan to rowne
Brother qd he, here wonneth an olde rebekke
That had almoste as lefe to lese her necke
As for to yeue a peny of her good
I woll haue .xii. d, thothat she were wood
Or I wol sompne her to our office
And yet god wotte of her I knowe no vice
But for thou canst nat, as in this countre
Winne thy cost, take here ensample of me.
This sompner clapped at ꝑ wenches gate
Come out he sayd, thou olde verytrote
I trowe thou hast some frere or preest with the
Who clapped there said this wife, benedicite
God saue you sir, what is your sweete will
I haue qd he, of somons of the here a bill
Up payne of curling loke that thou be
To morowe before our Archedeacons kne
To answere to the court of certayne thynges
Nowe lorde qd she, Jesu kyng of kynges
So wisely helpe me, as I ne may
I haue ben sicke, and that ful many a day
I may nat go so ferre, qd she, ne ryde
But I be dead, so pricketh it in my syde
May I not aske a libell sir Sompnour
And answere there by my procutour
To suche thing as men wolde appose me
Yes qd this Sompner, pay anon let se
Twelfe pens to me, and I wil the acquite
I shall no profite haue here of but lite
My maister hath the profite and not I
Come of and lette me ridden hastely
Yeue me .xii. pens I may no lenger tary
Twelfe pens qd she, lady sayntMary
So wisely helpe me out of care and synne
This wolde wo ld though I shoulde it winne
Ne haue I nat .xii. d. within my holde
Ye knowe well, that I am poore and olde
Kythe your almesse on me poore wretche
Nay than qd he, the foule fende me fetche
Yf I the arrust, though thou shuldest be spilt
Alas qd she, god wotte yet haue I no gilt
Pay me quod he, or by swete sayntIues
I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette, whiche thou owest me of olde
When thou madest thy husbonde cokolde
I payde at home for thy correccion
Thou lyest qd she, by my saluacion
Ne was I neuer er nowe, wedded wife
Sompned vnto youre court in al my life
Ne neuer I nas but of body trewe
Vnto the deuill blacke and rough of hewe
Yeue I thy body and my panne also.
And what the deuil heard her curse so
Upon her knees, he said in this manere
Nowe Mably, myn owne mother dere
Is this your wil in ernest that ye sey?
The deuil qd she, fetche him er he dey
And panne and all, but he woll him repent.
Nay olde stotte, that is not myne entent

Qd

Odthis Sompner, for to repent me
For any thing that I haue had of the
I wold I had thy smocke and eurey clothe.
Nowe brother qd the deuil, be nat wroth
Thy body and this pannie is myn by right
Thou shalt with me to hell yet to night
Where thou shalte knowen of our priuite
More than a maister of diuinite
And with ỹ word the foule fende him hent
Body and soule, he with the deuyll went
Where that sompners haue their heritage
And god that made after his ymage
Mankinde, saue and gyde vs and some
And lene the sompner good man to become
Lordings I coudhaue told you, qd this frere
Had I had leyser, of this sompner here
After the text of Christe, Poule, and Johan
And of other doctours many one
Suche paynes, as your hertes might agrise
Albeit so, that no tonge may it deuise
Though ỹ I might a thousande winter tell
The peynes of that cursed house of hell
But for to kepe vs from that cursed place
Wake, and prayeth Jesu of his grace
So kepe vs from the temptour Sathanas
Herkeneth this word, beware as i this cas
The lyon sitteth in his awayte alway
To slee the innocent, if that he may
Disposeth aye your hertes to withstonde
The fende, ỹ you wolde make thral & bonde
He may not tempte you ouer your might
For Christ wol be your champion & knight
And prayeth, that this sompner him repente
Of his misdede, er that the fende him hente.

¶ Here endeth the freres tale, & begynneth the Sompners prologue.

THys Sompner in hys stirropes hye stode
Upon thys Frere, his hearte was so wode
That lyke an aspen lefe he quoke for yre
Lordinges (qd he) but one thing I desire
I you beseche, that of your curtesy
Sithens ye han herde this false frere ly
As suffereth me I may my tale tell
This frere bosteth that he knoweth hell
And god wote that is lytell wonder
Freres and fendes ben but lytell a sonder
For parde, ye han often tyme herde tell
Howe that a frere ravished was to hell
In spirite ones by a vision
And as an angel ledde him vp and doun
To shewe him the paynes that there were
In al the place saw he not a frere
Of other folke he saw ynowe in wo
Unto the aungell spake the frere tho
Nowe sir qd he, han freres suche a grace
That none of hem shall come in this place?
Yes qd this aungell, many a millyoun
And vnto Sathanas ladde he him adoun
And nowe hath Sathanas suche a tayle
Broder than of a Carryke is the sayle
Holde vp thy tayle thou Sathanas (qd he)
Shewe forth thyne erse, let the frere se
Where is the nest of freres in this place
And er that halfe a furlonge way of space
(Right as bees swarmenout of an hyue)
Out of the deuylles erse they gan dryue
Twenty thousande freres on a route
And throughout hell swarmed all aboute
And comen ayen, as fast as they might gon
And in to his erse they crepten euerychon
He clapte his tayle ayen, and lay styll.
This frere, whan he loked had his fyll
Upon the turmentes of this sory place
His spirite god restored of his grace
Unto his body ayen, and he awoke
But natheles, yet for fere he quoke
So was the deuylles erse aye in his mynde
That is his herytage of very kynde
God saue you al, saue this cursed frere
My prologue wol I ende in this manere.

¶ Here endeth the Sompners prologue, and folowerth his tale.

LOrdinges there is in Yorkshire, as I gesse
A marshye countre called Holdernesse
In whiche there wente a limitour aboute
To preache, and eke to begge, it is no doute
And so befell that on a daye this frere
Had preached in a churche in hys manere
And specially abouen euery thinge
Exited he the people in his prechinge
To trentals, and to yeuen for goddes sake
Wherwith men mighten holy houses make
There as diuine seruice is honoured
Not there as it is wasted and deuoured
Ne there it nedeth not for to be yeuen

As

As to poste of moners that mote wel ben
Thanked be god, in wete and habundaunce
Trewely he berneth (qd he) fro penaunce
Her frendes soules, as wel olde as yonge
If that they be hastely yronge
Not for to yeue a pyese ioly and gay
(he sigureth not but one mese a day)
Deliuereth out (qd he) anon the soules
Ful harde it is with sleshe hoke or with oules
To ben yclawed, or to brenne or bake
Now spedeth you hastely for Cristes sake.
And when this frere had said all his entent
With qui cum patre, forth his way he went
Whan folk i church had yeue hi wher hem lest
He went his way, no lenger would he rest
With scrip & tipped staffe, ytukked hye
In euery house he gan to pore and prye
And begged mele and chese, or ris corne
His felowe had a staffe typped with horne
A payre of tables all of yuory
And a poyntell polished fetously
And wrote alway the names as he stode
Of all folke, that yaue hem any goode
Ascaunce as he wolde for hem pray
Yeue vs a bushell wheate, malte, or rye
A goddes kychell, or a trippe of chese
Or elis what ye lyst, I maye not chese
A goddes halfpeny, or a masse penny
Or yeue vs of your brawne, if ye haue any
A dagon of your blanket, leue dame
Our sulter dere, lo here I write your name
Bacon or bese, or suche thing as ye fynde
A sturdy harlot went hem ay behynde
That was her hostes man, and bare a sacke
And that no man yaue hem, layde it on his backe
And when he was out at the dore anone
He plaied away the names euerychone
That he before had written in his tables
He serued hem with nyses and with fables.
Nay ther thou lyest Sompner (qd the frere)
Peace (qd our host) for cristes mother dere
Tell forth thy tale, and spare it not at all
But thanne I qd the Sompner, so I shall.
So long he went fro house to house till he
Came to an house, ther as he was wont to be
Refreshed more than in an hundred places
Sicke lay the good man, whose the place is
Bedrid vpon a couche lowe he lay
Deus hic (qd he) O Thomas freend good day
Sayd this frere, curteisly and softe
Thomas god yelde it you, full ofte
Haue I vpon this benche faren full wele
Here haue I eaten many a mery mele
And fro the benche he droue away the cate
And layde adowne his potent and his hate
And eke his scrippe, & set hym softe adowne
His felawe was go walked in to the towne
Forth with his knaue, for to that hostelrye
Where as he hope hym ys vitaylle to lye.
O dere maister, quod this sicke man
Howe haue ye faren syrthen March began
I sawe you not this fourtenyght and more.
God wote (qd he) labored haue I ful sore
And specially for thy saluacion
Haue I sayd many a precious orison
And for our other freendes, god hem blesse
I haue this day ben at your church at messe
And sayd a sermon, after my simple witte
Not all after the text of holy writte
For it is harde to you, as I suppose
And therfore I wol teche you all the glose
Glosing is a glorious thinge certayne
For letter sleeth, as we clerkes sayne
There haue I hem taught to ben charitable
And spende her good there as it is reasonable
And there I sawe our dame, a where is she
Yonder in the yerde I trowe she be
Sayd this man, and she wol come anon
Eye maister welcome ye be by saint Johan
Sayd this wife, howe fare ye hertely.
This frere ariseth vp full curteisly
And her embraseth in his armes narowe
And kisseth her swetely, & cheerketh as a sparowe
With his lippes, dame (qd he) right wele (wote
As he that is your seruaunt euery dele
Thanked be god, that you haue soule & lyfe
Yet sawe I not this day so fayre a wife
In all the churche, so god saue me
Ye god amende all faultes sir (qd she)
Algates welcome ye be, by my fay.
Graūt mercy dame, ý haue I foūde alway
But of your great goodnesse, by your leue
I wol pray you, that ye not you greue
I wol with Thomas speke a litle throwe
These curates ben ful negligent & slowe
To groper tenderly a mannes conscience
In shrifte, & in preching is my diligence
And to studye on Peters wordes & Paules
I walke to fisshe cristen mennes soules
To yelde Jesu Christ his proper rent
To spreade his wordes, is all myne entent.
Nowe by your leue dere maister (qd she)
Chideth him well for saynt charite
He is aye angry as a pysse myre
Though that he haue all that he can desire
Though I hi wry a night, & make hi warm
And

Jnd ouer him lay my legge or myn arme
He groneth lyke our boye ꝑ lyeth in the fye
Other dispoyte of him right none haue J
J may not please him in no maner caas.
O Thomas, je vous die, Thomas Thomas
This maketh ꝑ fende, this muste ben amended
Jre is a thing that god hyghly defended
Jnd therof wol J speke a worde or two
(Now maister (qd the wyfe) er that J go
What wol ye dyne? J wol go ther aboute.
Now dame (qd he) je vous die sanz doute
Jaue J not of a capon but the lyuer
Jnd of your whyte breed, but a shyuer
Jnd after that a rosted pygges heed
(But J nolde not for me no beest were deed)
Then had J knowe for my suffysaunce
J am a man of lytel sustynaunce
My spirite hath his fostryng in the Byble
My body is aye so redy and so penyble
To wake, that my body is distroyde
J pray you dame, be ye nought anoyde
Though J so fredly you my counsaile shewe
By god, J nolde haue tolde it but a fewe
(Nowe sir (qd she) but one worde er ye go
My childe is deed, within these wekes two
Jone after that ye wente out of this toun
His berthe sawe J by reuelacioun
Jayd this freere, at home in our dortoure
J dare well sayne, er that halfe an houre
After his berthe, J sawe him borne to blysse
Jn myne auisyon, god me so wysse
So dyd our lectern, and our fermerere
That han ben true freres this fyfty yere
They may nowe, god be thanked of his loue
Waken her iubely, and walken alone
Jnd vp J arose, and all our conuent eke
With many a teere trylling on our cheke
Withouten noyse or clatteryng of belles
Te deum was our songe, and nothyng elles
Saue that to Christ J sayd an orison
Thankyng him of my reuelacion
For sir and dame, trusteth me right well
Our orisons ben more effectuell
Jnd more we seen of Christes secret thinges
Thā bokel folke, although they were kinges
We lyue in pouerte, and in abstinence
Jnd bokel folke in richesse and dispence
Jn meat and drinke, ā in her foule delyte
We han this worldly lust al in dispyte
Lazar and Diues, lyueden diuersely
Jnd diuers guerdons had they therby
Who so wol pray, he must fast a be clene
Jnd fatte his soule, ā make his body lene
We fare as saith ꝑ apostell, clothe and foode
Sufficeth vs, though they be not ful goode
The clennesse ā the fastyng of vs freres
Maketh that Christ accepteth our prayeres.
(Lo Moyses, fourty dayes ā fourty nyght
Fasted, er that the hye god of his myght
Spake with him in the mount of Synay
With empty wombe, fastyng many a day
Receyued he the lawe, that was writtен
With gods fynger, and eke well ye witten
Jn mount Oxed, er he had any speche
With the hygh god, that is oure soules leche
He fasted longe, and was in contemplaunce.
(Jaron, ꝑ had the temple in gouernaunce
Jnd eke the other prestes euerychone
Jnto the temple whan they shulde gone
To prayen for the people, ā done seruice
They nolde drinke in no maner wyse
No drinke, that dronke might hem make
But there in abstynence pray and wake
Lest that they deyden, take hede what J say
But they be sobre that for the people pray
Ware that J say, no more for it suffyseth
Our lorde Jesu, as holy writte deuyseth
Jaue vs ensample of fastyng and prayeres
Therfore we mendicantes, we sely freres
Ben wedded to pouert and continence
To charite, humblenesse, and abstinence
To persecution for right wysnesse
To wepyng, mysericorde, and clennesse
Jnd therfore may ye se that our prayeres
(J speke of vs mendicam, we freres)
Ben to the hie god more acceptable
Than yours, with your fest at your table.
(Fro Paradyse first, it J shal not lye
Was man chased out for his glotonye
Jnd chast was man in paradyse certayne
But herken now Thomas what J shal sayn
J haue no text therof, as J suppose
But J fynde it in maner of a glose
That specially our swete lorde Jesus
Spake this by freres, whan he sayd thus
Blessed be they that pore in spyrite ben
Jnd so forth al the gospell may ye seen
Whether it be lyker our perfection
Other that swymmen in possession
Fye on her pompe, and on her glotonye
Jnd in her leudenesse, J hem defye
Me thynketh they ben lyke Jouinyan
Fat as a whale, and walkyng as a swan
As violent as botel in the spence
Her prayer is of ful lytle reuerence
Whā they for soules say ꝑ psalme of Dauid

Lo bensse they seyn (Cor meum eructauit)
Who so loweth Cristes gospel is his lore
But we that humble be, chaste, and poore
Werkers of gods worde, & not auditours
Therfore right as an hauke at a fours
Up swyngeth in to the eyre, so prayeres
Of charitable and chaste busy freres
Maken her fours to gods eares two
Thomas Thomas, so mote I ride or go
And by that lorde that cleped is saint Yue
Nere þ our broder were, þ shulde not thriue
For in our chapitre pray we day and night
To Crist, that he the sende heith & myght
Thy body for to welden hastely.
God wotte qd he, nothyng therof fele I
As helpe me Crist, as in fewe yeres
Haue I spended vpon dyuers maner freres
Wel many a pond, yet fare I neuer the bette
Certayne my good haue I almost bestette
Farwel my good, for it is almost ago.
The frere answered, o Thomas dost þ for
What nedeth the diuerse freres leche
What nedeth him that hath a parfite leche
To sechen other leches in the toune
Your inconstaunce is your confusioun
Holde ye me than, or els our couent
To prayen for you insufficient
Thomas, that lape nis not worthe a myte
Your maladye is for we haue to lyte
A, yeue that couent halfe a quarter otes
And yeue that couent foure & twenty grotes
And yeue that frere a penny, and let him go
Nay nay Thomas, it may nothyng be so
What is a farthig worth parted in twelue
Lo, eche thing that is oned in him selue
Is more stronge, than whan it is so skatered
Thomas, of me thou shalte not ben flatered
Thou woldest haue al our labour for nought
The hie god þ al this world hath wrought
Sayth, þ the werkeman is worthy his hire
Thomas, naught of your treasoure I desire
As for my selfe, but that all our couent
To pray for you is aye so dyligent
And for to buylden Cristes owne chyrche
Thomas, if ye wol lerne for to wyrche
Of buyldyng vp of chyrches may ye fynde
If it be good, in Thomas lyfe of Inde.
Ye lyggen here ful of angre and of yre
With which þ diuel setteth your herte on fyre
And chyden here this holy innocent
Your wife, that is so meke and pacient
And therfore trowe me Thomas if you lefte
Ye shulde not with thy wyfe, as for the beste
And beare this worde away by thy fayth
Touchyng surhe thyng, lo what þ wise saith
Within thy house be thou no lyon
To thy subiectes do thou none oppression
Ne make not thyn aquayntaunce to fle
And yet Thomas, ercstones charge I the
Beware of her that in thy bosome slepeth
Ware the of the serpent, that so slyly crepeth
Under the grasse, and stingeth ful subtelly
Beware my sonne, and herken patiently
That tweny thousand men han lost her lyues
For striuing with her lemmans & her wyues
Now sens ye haue so holy and meke a wyfe
What nedeth you Thomas to make stryfe
There nys fowle ne serpent so cruell
(Whan men treden on his tayle) ne halfe so fell
As a woman is, whan she hath caught an yre
Vengeaunce is than all her desyre.
Ire is a synne, one of the greatest of seuen
Abhominable vnto the hygh god of heuen
And to him selfe it is a distruction
This euery lerde vicare and parson
Can say, how yre engendreth homicyde
Ire is in sothe the executour of pride
I could of yre say so much sorowe
That my tale shuld last yet to morowe
And therfore I pray god both day and night
That to an yrous man he sende lytel myght
It is great harme, and ful great pyte
To set an yrous man in hie degre.

Whylom there was an yrous potestate
As saith Seneke, that duryng his estate
Vpon a day out rydden knightes two
And as fortune wolde it shuld be so
That one of hem came home, þ other nought
Anon the knight before the iudge is brought
That said thus: thou hast thy felowe slayne
For which I deme the to the deth certayne
And to another knyght commaunded he
Go lede him to the deth I charge the
And hapned as they went by the wey
Towarde the place, there he shuld dey
The knyght came, which men wold had be ded
Than thought they it was the best rede
To lede hem both to the iudge agayne
They sayden lord, the knight hath not slayne
His felow, here he stant hole alyue.
Ye shullen be ded (qd he) so mote I thriue
That is to say, both one, two, and thre
And to the first knight, right thus spake he.
I dampned the, thou must algate be ded
And thou must also lese neres thyn hed

For

for thou art cause why thy felawe deyed
And to the third knight, right thus he sayth
Thou hast not done that I cõmaunded the
And thus he dyd hem sleen all thre.

Iroule Cambyses was eke dronkelewe
And ayr delyted him to ben a shrewe
And so byfel, a lorde of his meyne
That loued wel vertuous morallyte
Sayd on a day bytwix hem two right thus
A lorde is lost, if he be aught vicious
And dronkennesse eke is a foule record
Of any man, and namely of a lorde
There is many an eye and many an eere
Awaytyng on a lorde, he not where
For gods loue drinketh more temperatly
Wyne maketh a man to lese wretchedly
His mynde, and his lymmes everychone.
The tyuers shalt thou se (qd he) anone
And preue it by thyn owne experience
That wyne ne doth to folke no suche offrence
There nys no wyne byreueth me my myght
Of honde, of foote, ne of myn eye syght
And for dispyte he dronke mochell more
An hundred tymes than he dyd before
And right anon, this cursed vylous wretche
Let this knyghtes sonne byfore him fetche
Cõmaũding him he shuld byfore him stõde
And sodainly he toke his bowe in honde
And vp the strynge he pulled to his eere
And if an arrowe he slough the chylde there.
Now whether haue I a syker hõd or none
Qd he, is all my might and mynde agone,
hath wyne byreuen me myne eyen syght,
(What shuld I tel the answer of the knight
His sonne was slayne, ther is no more to say
Beware therfore, with lordes how ye playe
Syng placebo, and I shal if I can
But if it be vnto a pore man
To a pore man, one shulde his vices tell
But not to a lord, though he shuld go to hell.

Loryous Cirus, thilke Persien
Howe dispreyed he the ryuer of Gysen
For that an horse of hys was dreynt therin
When he went Babylone to wynne
He made that the ryuer was so smal
That men might ryde and waden ouer all
Lo, what sayd he, that so wel teche can
Ne be no felowe to none vyous man
Ne with no wode man walke by the way
Leste thou repent, I wol no farther say.
Now Thomas leue brother, leane thyn eye
Thou shalte me fynd as iust, as is a squire
Holde not the dyuels knyfe aye in thyn herte
Thyne angre doth the al to sore smerte
But shewe to me all thy confession.
(Nay (qd the sicke man) by saynte Symon
I haue be shrine this day of my curate
I haue tolde him all myne estate
Nedeth no more to speke of it, saith he
But if me lyst, of myne humilite.
yeue me thã of thy gold, to make our cloister
Qd he, for many a muskle & many an oyster
Whan other men haue ben ful wel at ese
Hath ben our foode, our cloystre for to rese
And yet god wot, vnneth the foundament
Parfourned is, ne of our pauement
Is not a tile yet within our wones
By god we owen fourty pounde for stones
Now helpe Thomas, for him that harowed
For eis mote we our bokes sel (hel
And if you lacke our predicacion
Than goth this world al to destruction
For who so wold fro this world vs byreue
So god me saue, Thomas by your leue
He wold byreue out of this world the sonne
For who can techen & worchen as we conne
And that is not of lytle tyme (qd he)
Sut sith Helye was, or Helyse
Han freres ben, that fynde I of record
In charite, ythonked be our lorde
Now Thomas, for saynte charite
And downe anon he sytteth on his kne.
(This sicke man wexe nye woode for yre
He wolde the frere had ben a fyre
With his false dissimulacion
Suche thinges as ben in my possessyon
(Qd he) that may I geue, and none other
Ye sain me thus, how ỹ I am your brother.
Ye certes (qd this frere) trusteth me wele
I toke our dame our letter and our sele.
(Now (qd he) wel, a somwhat shal I yeue
Vnto your holy couent, while I lyue
And in thine honde, thou shalt it haue anone
On this condition, and other none
That thou depart it so, my leue brother
That euery frere, haue as muche as other
This shalt thou swere on thy profession
Without fraude or cauelacion.
(I swere it (qd the frere) by my fayth
And therwithal his honde in his he layth
Lo here my faith, in me shall be no lacke.
(Than put thyn honde down by my backe
Sayd this man, and grope wel behynde
Beneth my buttocke, there thou shalte fynde

Seyng that I haue hyd in priuite
My thought the frere, that shall go with me
Adowne he shoth his hand to the tayle
In hope to fynde there some good gyfte
And whan this sicke man felte this frere
Aboute his towell, groppyng here and there
Amyd his bonde, he let the frere a farte
There nys no capell, drawyng in a carte
That myght haue let a fart of suche a soun.
The frere vp sarte, as doth a wode lyon
A false chorle (qd the frere) for goddes bones
This hast thou in dispyte do, for the nones
Thou shalt abye this farte, if I may
His meyny, that herde of this affray
Came lepyng in, and chased out the frere
And forth he goth, with a ful angry chere
And fette his felowe, there as lay his store
He loked as he were a wylde bore
He gyrned his tethe, so was he wrothe
A sturdy pace down to the court he gothe
Where as there wõned a man of gret honour
To whom that he was alway confessour
This worthy man, was lord of that village
This frere came, as he were in a rage
Where as this lord sat eatyng at his borde
Vnnethes myght the frere speke o worde
Tyl at the last he sayd, god you se.
This lorde gan loke, and said benedicite
What frere John, what maner world is this
I se wel that somethyng is a mys
Ye loke as thoȝ ꝑ wood were ful of theuis
Syt down, and tell me what your grefe is
And it shal be amended, if that I may.
I haue (qd he) had a dispite to day
God yelde it you, adowne in your village
That in this worlde, is none so poore a page
That he nolde haue abhominacioun
Of that I haue receyued in your toun
And yet me greueth nothyng so sore
Is that the olde churle, with lockes hore
Blasphemed hath our holy couent eke.
Now maister (qd this lord) I you beseke
No maister sir (qd he) but seruitour
Though I haue had in shole that honour
God lyketh not, that men vs Raby calle
Neyther in market, ne in your large halle.
No force (qd he) but tel me of your grefe.
Sir (qd this frere) an odious mischefe
This day is betyde, to myne ordre, & to me
And so per consequens to eche degre
Of holy churche, god amende it sone.
Sir (qd the lorde) ye wot what is to done
Disturbye you not, you ben my confessoure
ye ben the salte of the erth, and the sauoure
For goddes loue your pacience now holde
Telleth me your grefe: & he anon him tolde
As ye han herd byfore, ye wot wel what
The lady of the house, aye styll sat
Tyl she had herde what the frere salde.
Eye gods mother (qd she) a blyssful mayde
Is there nought els, tel me sayth fully
Madame (qd he) howe thynketh ye therby
Howe that me thynketh: so god me spede
I say a churle hath done a churles dede
What shulde I say, god let him neuer the
His sicke herd is ful of bane
I holde him in a maner of frenesye.
Madame (qd he) by god I shall not lye
But I in any wyse may ben on him a wreke
I shal flaunder him ouer al, where I speke
That false blasphemour, that charged me
To parte it, that might not departed be
To euery man lyche, with mischaunce.
The lord sat styll, as he were in a traunce
And in his hert he roled vp and doun
Howe that this churle had ymaginacioun
To shewe such a probleme to the frere
Neuer erst ne now ne herde I suche a matere
I trowe the deuel put it in his mynde
In all Arsmetrike, there shal no man fynde
Byfore this day, of suche a question
Who shulde make a demonstracion
That euery man shulde haue lyke his parte
Of a sowne or sauour of a farte
Out vpon the proude churle, I shyte vpon his face.
Lo sirs (qd the lord) with hard grace
Who euer herde of suche a thyng or nowe
To euery man lyke, tell me howe
It is an impossible, it may not be
Eye out vpon the churle, god let him neuer the
The rombelyng of a farte, and euery soun
Nys but of eyre reuerberacioun
And euer it wasteth lytel and lytel away
There is no man can demen, by my fay
If that it were departed equally
What-to my churle: lo, yet how shrewdly
Vnto my confessour to day he spake
I holde him certayne a demoniake.
Now etcth your meate, & let ꝑ churle go pley
Let him go hongen him selfe a dyuel way.
Now stode the lordes squier at the borde
That carfe his meate, & herd word by word
Of al thyng, of whiche I haue you sayde
My lorde (qd he) be not yuell apayde
I couthe tel for a gowne clothe
To you sir frere, so that ye ben not wrothe

How

now that this carte shuld euyn ydeled be
Amonges your couent, if it lyketh the.
Tel on (qd ỳ lorde) & thou shalt haue anon
A gowne clothe, by god & by sayntē John
My lorde (qd he) whan ỳ the weder is faire
Without en winde, or perturbyng of ayre
Let bring a carte whele here into this hall
But lobe he haue his spokes all
Twelue spokes hath a carte whele cōmenly
And bryng me than .xii. freres, wote ye why?
For thyrteene is a couent as I gesse
Your confessour here, for his worthynesse
Shal performe vp the nombre of his couēt
Thā shulle they knelen adown by one assent
And to euery spokes ende, in this manere
Ful sadly lay his nose shall a frere
Your noble confessour there, god him saue
Shal holde his nose vpright vnder the naue
Than shal this churle, yt bely stylle & tought
As any tabour, hither ben ybrought
And set him on the whele, right of this carte
Vpon the naue, & make him ley a parte
And ye shullen se, vp peryl of my lyfe
By preue, whiche is demonstratife
That rownally the sowne of it wil wende
And eke the stynke, vnto the spokes ende
Saue ỳ this worthy man your cōfessour
(Bycause he is a man of great honour)
Shall haue the first frutes, as reson is
The noble vsage of freres yet is .s.
The worthest mā of hem shall first be serued
And certainly, he hath it wel deserued
He hath to day taught vs so moche good
With preching in the pulpet there he stood
That I may vouchesafe, I say for me
He had the first smell of fartes thre
And so wolde al his brethren hardely
He bereth him so fayre and holyly.
(The lord, ỳ lady, q̄ he, q̄ he mā, saue the frere
Sayd that Jenken spake in this matere
As wel as Ouyde dyd or Ptholome
Touching the churles sayde subtilte
And bye wyt made him speke as he spake
He ys no foole, ne no demonyake
And Jenken hath ywonne a newe gowne
My tale is done, we ben almoste at towne.

Here endeth the Sompners tale, and here foloweth the clerkes of Oxenfordes prologue.

SIr clerke of Oxford, our hoste sayde
Ye ryde as styll and coye, as doth a mayde
Were new spoused, sytting at the boorde
This day ne herd I of your mouth a worde
I trowe that ye study aboute some sophyme
But Salomon saith, al thyng hath tyme
For goddes sake, beth of better chere
It is no tyme newe to studye here
Tell vs some mery tale by your fay
For what man is entred in to a play
He nedes must vnto that play assent
But precheth not, as freres done in lent
To make vs for our olde synnes to wepe
Ne that thy tale make vs not to slepe.
Tel vs some mery thyng of auentures
Your termes, your figures, & your colōures
Kepe hem in store, tyl so be that ye endyte
Hygh style, as whan men to kynges write
Speketh so playne at this time, I you pray
That we may vnderstonde what ye say.
¶ This worthy clerke benygnly answerde
Hoste (qd he) I am vnder your yerde
Ye haue of vs as nowe the gouernaunce
And therfore wol I do you obeysaunce
As farre as reason axeth hardely
I wol you tell a tale, whiche that I
Lerned at Padow, of a worthy clerke
As preued is by his wordes and his werke
He is nowe deed, and nayled in his cheste
I pray to god sende his soule good reste.
Fraunces Petrarke, the laureat poete
Hyght this clerke, whose rhetorike sweete
Enlumyned all Itayle of poetrye
As Liuyan dyd of Philosophye
Or lawe, or other arte particulere
But deth ỳ wol not suffre vs dwellen here
But as it were the twynklyng of an eye
Hem both hath slayne, & all we shal dye.
¶ But for to tellen of this worthy man
That taught me this tale, as I first began
I say that he first with hie style endyteth
(Or he the body of his tale writeth)
A proheme, in which discriueth he
Piemount, and of Saluce the countre
And speketh of Apēnyn the hylles hye
That ben the boundes of west Lumbardye
And of mount Vesulus in speciall
Where as the Poo, out of a wel small
Taketh his first spryng and his sours
That estwarde euer increseth in his cours

To Emelie weed, to Ferrar, and to Denyte
The which a long time were to deuise
And trewly, as to my iudgement
Me thinketh it a thinge impartinent
Save that him lyst conney his matere
But this is his tale as ye shullen here.

Here endeth the prologue of the clerke of Orforde, and here foloweth his tale.

HEre is, in the west syde of Italye
Down at ꝑ rote of Vesulus the colde
A lusty playne, habundaunt of vitaylle
Wher many a town and tour ꝑ maist beholde
That founded were, in time of fathers olde
And many another delectable syght
And Saluces, this noble countre hyght.

A Markes whylom was in that londe
As were his worthy eldres him before
And obeysaunt aye redy to his honde
Were all his lieges, bothe lesse and more
Thus in delite he liued, & hath done yore
Beloued & drad, through fauour & foztune
Both of his lordes and of his commune.

Therwith he was, as to speke of lynage
The gentilest yborne of al Lombardy
A fayre person, & strong, & yonge of age
And ful of honour and curtesye
Discrete ynowe, his countre for to gye
Save in some thynges he was to blame
And Walter was thys yong lordes name

I blame him thus, that he consydred nought
In tyme comming, what him might betyde
But on his lust present was all his thought
And for to hauke and hunt on every syde
Weyny all other cures let he slyde
And eke he ne wold, that was worst of all
Wedde no wife, for ought that myght befall

Onely that poynte hys people bare so sore
That flockmele on a day to him they went
And one of hem, that wisest was of lore
(Or els that the lorde wolde best assent
That he should tel him what his people ment
Or els coude he shrewe suche matere)
Hye to the Markes said, as ye shullen here.

O noble Marques, your humanyte
Assureth vs, and preueth vs hardinesse
As ofte tyme as is necessitee
That we may to you tell our heuynesse
Accepteth lorde of your gentylnesse
That we to you with pitous hert playne
And let your eares nat my voice disdayne

Al haue I not to done in this matere
More than another hath in this place
Yet for as moche, as ye my lorde so dere
Haue alway shewed me fauour and grace
I dare the better aske of you a space
Of audience, to shewen our requeste
And ye my lorde to done right as you leste

For certes lorde: so wel vs lyketh you
And all your werkes, & euer haue don, ꝑ we
Ne could our own selfe deuisen how we
We myght more lyuen in hyrenesse
Save oonly lorde, if it your wyl be
That for to be a wedded man, you lest
Thã wer your people in sourrain herte at rest

Boweth your necke under the blysful yoke
Of sourrayntee, and not of seruise
Which men clepen spousayle or wedlocke
And thinketh lord, amõg your thoughtes wise
How that our dayes passen in sondry wise
For though we slepe or wake, rome, or ryde
Ay fleeth the time, it wol no man abyde

And though your grene youth flowre, as yet
In creepeth age al way as stylle as stone
And deth manaseth euery age, and smyte
In eche estate, for there escapeth none
And also certain, as we knowen echone
That we shul dye, as uncertayne we all
Ben of that day, that derke is shall on vs fall

Accepteth than of vs the trewe entent
That neuer yet refused your heste
And we wol al lorde, if ye wol assent
Chese you a wyfe in shorte tyme, of the lest
Borne of the gentilest and of the best
Of al this londe, so that it ought seme
Honour to god & you, as nere as we can deme

Delyuer vs out of al this busy drede
And take a wyfe, for hye goddes sake
For if it so befell, as god forbede

That

That thorow deth, your lignage shuld take
And that a straunge succession shuld take
your heritage, O, wo were vs on lyue
Wherfore we pray you hastely to wyue.

Her meke prayer and her pitious chere
Made the Markes for to haue pyte
And (quod he) myn owne people dere
To that I neuer erst thought, constrayne me
I me reioyced of my liberte
That selden tyme is founde in mariage
There I was free, I mote ben in seruage.

But natheles, I se your true entente
And trust vpon your wyt, & haue done aye
Wherfore of my fre will I woll assente
To wedden me, as sone as euer I may
But there, as ye haue proffred me to day
To chese me a wife, I you release
That choyce, & pray you of that proffer ese

For god it wote, that children ofte been
Unlyke her worthy eldres, hem before
Bounte cometh all of god, & not of the streen
Of which they ben engendred and ibore
I trust in goddes bounte, and therfore
My marriage, myn estate, and rest
I him betake, he may don as him lest.

Let me alone in chesyng of my wyfe
That charge vpon my backe I wol endure
But I you pray, and charge vpon your lyfe
That what wife I take, ye me ensure
To worship her, whiles her lyfe may dure
In worde and werke, here, and els where
As she an Emperours doughter were

And furthermore, thus shal ye swere, that ye
Tyrest my choice shal neuer grutch ne strine
For sithe I shal forgo my liberte
At your request, as euer mote I thryue
There as myn hert is set, there wol I wyue
And but ye woll assent, in suche manere
I pray you speketh nomore in this matere.

With herty wyl they swore and assent
To all this thing, there sayd no wight nay
Besechyng him of grace er they went
That he wolde hem graunt a certayne day
Of his spousaile, as soone as euer he may
For yet alway the people somwhat dredde
Lest this Markes wolde no wife wedde.

He graunted hem a day, suche as him lest
On whiche he wolde be wedded sikerly
And sayd he dyd all this at her request
And they with humble entent ful buxumly
Kneling vpon her knees ful reuerently
Him thonked all, and thus they han an ende
Of her entent, and home ayen they wende

And here vpon he toke hys officers
Comaunding for the feest to purvay
And to his priuy knyghtes and squiers
Suche charge yaue, as he lyste on hem lay
And they to his comaundement obey
And eche of hem doth hys dilygence
To don to the feest reuerence.

Explicit pars prima et
sequitur secunda.

Thought ferre fro thilke place honorable
Where this Markes shope his mariage
There stode a thrope, of lyght ful delectable
In whiche poore folke of that village
Hadden her beestes and herbygage
And of her labour toke her sustenaunce
After that the erthe yaue hem habundaunce

Amonge this poore folke, ther dwelled a man
Whiche that was holden poorest of hem all
But hye god sometyme sende can
His grace vnto a litel oxe stall
Janicola men of that thrope hym call
A doughter had he, fayre ynoughe to sight
And Griselde this yonge maiden hight.

But for to speke of vertuous beaute
Than was she one the fayreste vnder sonne
And ful poorely yfostred was she
No lyckerous lust was in her hert ironne
Well ofter of the wel than of the tonne
She dronke, and for she wolde vertue plese
She knewe wel labour, but not ydle ese.

But though this mayde were tender of age
Yet in the brest of her virginite
There was enclosed, sadde and ripe corage
And in great reuerence of charite
Her olde poore father fostred she
A fewe sheep spinning on the feld she kept
She wolde not ben idle til she slept.

And whē she homward came, she wold brig
Wortes and herbes, tymes ful ofte

Wchiche she shadde a sethe for her liuyng
And made her bed full harde, & nothing softe
And aye she kept her fathers lyfe on lofte
With euery obeysaunce and diligence
That child might do to the fathers reuerence

¶ Upon Grisylde the poore creature
Ofte hath the Markes set his eye
As he an huntynge rode paraunture
And when it fell, that he might her aspye
He (not with wanton lokyng of folye)
His eyen caste vponher, but in sadde wise
Upon her chere, he would him ofte auise.

¶ Cõmendinge in his hert her womanhede
And eke her vertue, passyng euery wight
Of so yonge age, as well in chere as in dede
For though the people haue no great insight
In vertue: he considered full ryght
Her bounte, and disposed that he wolde
Her wedde, if he euer wedde sholde.

The day of weddyng com, but no wight can
Tell, what woman it should be
For which meruayle, wondred many a man
And sayden, whan they were in her presence
Wol not our lorde yet leaue his vanite
Wol he not wedde, alas alas, the while
Why will he thus himselfe and vs begile.

¶ But natheles this Markes hath do make
Of gemmes, set in golde and in asure
Broches and ringes, for Grisyldes sake
And of her clothyng, toke he the mesure
Of a mayden lyke to her stature
And eke of other ornamentes all
That to suche a weddyng sholde fall

¶ The tyme vndren, in the same day
Approched, that the weddyng sholde be
And all the paleys put was in array
Bothe halle and chambre, eche in his degre
Houses of office stuffed with great pleute
There mayst thou se all daynteous vitayle
That may be foũde, as fer as lasteth Italye

¶ This royall Markes, richely arayde
Lordes and ladyes in his compayne
The whiche that to the feste were prayde
And of his retinue the bachelerye
With many a sowne of sondrie melodye
Vnto the village, of whiche I tolde
In this aray, the right way hath holde

¶ Grisilde (god wote of this full innocent
That for her was shape all this aray)
To fetche water at a well went
And cometh home as sone as euer she may
For well she heard say, that yke day
That the Markes sholde wed, & if she might
She wolde fayne seen some of that sight.

She thought: I wold vth other maidens gõde
That ben my felowes in our dore and se
The Markes, and therto wol I fonde
To done at home, as sone as it may be
The labour, whiche that longeth to me
And than may I at leyser it beholde
If she the way to the castel holde.

¶ And as she wolde ouer the threshold gon
The Markes came, and gan her for to call
And she sette downe her water potte anon
Beside the threshold of the ore stall
And downe vpon her knees she gan to fall
And vth sadde countenaunce knelede stil
Tyl she had herd what was the lordes will

¶ This thoughtful Markes spake to þ mayde
Wel soberly, and sayd in this manere
Where is your father Grisylde, he sayde
And she with reuerence and mekè chere
Answered, lord he is al redy here
And in she went, without lenger lette
And to the Markes she her father fette

¶ He be the honde than toke this olde man
And sayd thus, whan he had him asyde
Janycola, I neyther may ne can
Longer the pleasaunce of myne hert hyde
If that thou vouchesafe, whatsoeuer betide
Thy doughter wol I take, or that I wende
As for my wyfe, to my lyues ende.

Thou louest me, I wot wel certayne
And art my faithfull liege man ydone
And al that lyketh me, I dare well sayne
It lyketh the, and specially therfore
Tel me that point, that I haue said before
If that thou wolt to this purpose drawe
To take me for thy sonne in lawe.

¶ This sodayne case, the man astoned so
That reed he wext abashed, & all quaking
He stode, ne vneth sayd he wordes mo
But only thus (quod he) lorde my willyng
Is as ye wol, ne agenst your lykyng

I will

I wol nothyng, ye be my lorde so dere
Right as you lyst, gouerne this matere.

Than wol I thus (qd this Markes) sothly
That in thy chambre, I, you, and she
Haue a collation, and worest thou why?
For I wol aske her, if her wyll be
To be my wife, and rule her after me
And all this shall be done in thy presence
I wol not spede out of thyn audience

And in the chambre, whyle they were about
The reuerys, whiche ye shall after here
The people came into the house without
And wondred hem, in howe honest manere
So tructily she kept her father dere
But verely Grisylde wonder might
For neuer erst sawe she suche a sight.

No wonder is though she be astoned
To se so great a gest come in to that place
She was neuer to suche gestes woned
For whiche she loked with ful pale face
But shortly fro this mater for to pace
These were the wordes ỳ the Markes sayd
To this benigne and verey faythfull mayd

Grisilde he sayd, ye shall well vnderstonde
It lyketh vnto your father and me
That I you wedde, and eke it may so stonde
As I suppose, that ye wol that it so be
But these demaundes I aske first (qd he)
That sithen it shall be done in hasty wise
Wol ye therto assent, or els you auise.

I say thus, be ye redy with good herte
To all my lust, and that I frely may
As me best liketh, though ye langh or smerte
And neuer ye to grutche, night ne day
And ẏ I say yea, that ye say not ones nay
Neither i worde, ne by frowning countenaūce
Swere this, & here I swere our alyaunce.

Wondring vpon these wordes, quaking for
She sayd: lord, indigne & vnworthy (drede
Am I, to thylke honour that ye me bede
But right as you wol, so wol I
And here I swere, that neuer wyllingly
In word, werke, ne thought, I nil you disobie
For to be dede, though me were loth to dye.

This is ynough Grisilde myn (qd he)
And forth he gorth with a sobre chere
Out at the dore, and after came she
And to the people, he sayd in this manere
This is my wife, (qd he) that standeth here
Honoureth her, & loueth her, I you pray
Who so me loueth, there nis no more to say.

And for that nothing of her olde gere
She shulde bring in to hys house, he badde
That women shuld dispoyen her right there
Of which these ladies were nothing gladde
To hādle her clothes, in which she was clad
But natheleſſe, this mayden bright of hewe
Fro fote to heed they clothed han all newe.

Her heer han they kembed, ỳ lay vntressed
Ful rudely, and with her fingers smale
A crowne on her heed they han ydressed
And sette it ful of ouches great and smale
Of her array, what shoulde I make a tale
Vnneth the people her knew for her fayrnesse
When she transformed was in suche richesse

This Markes hath her spoused with a ringe
Brought for the same cause, & then her set
Upon an horse snowe white, wel amblinge
And to hys paleys, or he lenger let
With ioyfull people, that her ladde and met
Conueyed her, & thus the day they spende
In reuell, tyl the sonne gan discende

And shortely forth this tale for to chace
I say, that to this newe Markesesse
God hath ysent suche fauour of his grace
That it semed not, as by her lykelynesse
That she was borne and fedde in rudenesse
As in a cote, or in an ox stall
But norished in an emperoures hall.

To euery wight, the wo3en is so dere
And worshipful, ỳ folk ther as she was bore
And fro her byrthe, knewe her yere by yere
Vnneth trowed they, but durst haue swore
That to Janicola, of which I spake before
She doughter nas, for as by coniecture
Hem thought she was another creature,

For thoughe that euer vertuous was she
She was encreased in suche excellence
Of thewes good, set in hye bounte
And so discrete, and fayre of eloquence
So benigne, and digne of reuerence
And coude the peoples hertes so embrace
That echo her loued that loked in her face.

Not

Not onely of Saulsbure in the town
Sublymed was the bounte of her name
But eke beside, in many a regioun
If one sayde wel, an other sayd the same
So spradde of her bountie the fame
That men & women, bothe yonge and olde
Gone to Saluces her to beholde.

¶ This Walter lowly, and full royally
Wedded hathe with fortunate honestie
In gods peace: lyueth ful easely
At home, & outward grace ynough had he
And for he sawe that vnder lowe degre
Was honest vertue hid, the people him held
A prudent man, and that is seene well selde.

¶ Not onely this Grisylde, through her wit
Couthe al the feate of wyfely humblesse
But eke, whan the case requited it
The comen profyte couthe she redresse
There nas discorde, rancour, ne heuinesse
In al the londe, that she ne couthe apese
And bring hem all wisely in rest and ese

Though her husbonde absent were or none
If gentlemen, or other of her contre
Were wrothe, she wolde bring hem at one
So wyse and ripe wordes had she
And iugement of so great equite
That she fro heuen sent was, as men wende
People to saue, & euery wrong to amende.

¶ Not long tyme after this Grisylde
Was wedded, she a doughter had ybore
Al had she leuer haue borne a man chylde
Glad was ꝑ Walter & his folke therfore
For though a mayde childe came al before
She may to a man childe attayne
By lykelyhode, sythens she is not barayne.

¶ Explicit pars secunda: Et incipit pars tercia.

¶ There fel, as it befalleth oft tymes mo
Whan ꝑ this child had sucked but a throwe
This Walter in his herte longed so
To tempt his wife, her sadnesse to knowe
That he ne myght out of his herte throwe
This marueylous desyre, his wife to assaye
Needelesse god wot, he thought her to affraye

He had assayed her ynoughe before
And fonde her euer good, what neded it
Her for to tempte & alway more and more
Though some man prayse it for a subtil wit
But as for me, I say ful euyll it syt
To assay a wife, when that it is no nede
And put her in anguyshe and in drede.

For which this marches wrought this manere
He came alone a nights there as she lay (re
With sterne face, and right ugly chere
And sayd thus: Grisilde (quod he) that day
That I toke the out of thy poore aray
And put the in estate of hye noblesse
Thou hast not that forgoten, as I gesse

¶ I say Grisylde, the present dignite
In whiche I haue put the, as I trowe
Maketh not the forgetful for to be
That I the tooke in poore estate ful lowe
For any wele, thou must thy selfe knowe
Take hede of euery worde what I say
There is no wight that heereth but we tway

Thou wottest thy selfe, how ꝑ thou came here
Into this house, it is not longe ago
And though to me thou be both lefe and dere
Unto my gentrys thou art nothynge so
They saye, to hem it is great shame and wo
For to ben subiecte, and ben in seruage
To the[illegible] borne art in so smale a village

¶ And namely syth thy doughter was ybore
These wordes haue they spoken douteles
But I desire, as I haue done before
To lyue my life with hem, in rest and pes
I may not in this case be recheles
I mote done with thy doughter, for the best
Not as I wolde, but as my gentrys lest

¶ And yet god wote, this is ful lothe to me
But nathelesse without thy wityng
I wol nought do, but thus I wol (quod he)
That thou to me assent, as in this thyng
Shewe nowe thy pacience, in thy werkyng
That thou me hight and swore in our village
That day that maked was our mariage.

When she had heard al thys, she not ameued
Neither in worde, in chere, ne in countenaunce
For as it semed, she was not agreued
She sayd lorde, al lyeth in your plesaunce
My childe and I, with herte and obeysaunce
Ben youres all, and ye may saue or spyll
Your owne, worketh your owne wil

¶ There may nothing, so god my soule saue
Lyking to you, that may displese me
Or I desire nothyng for to haue
Ne dred for to lese, saue onely ye
This wil is in my herte, and aye shal be
No lengthe of tyme, or deth it may deface
Neither chãge my corage into another place

¶ Glad was the Markes of her answering
But yet he fayned as he were not so
Drery was his chere, and his lokyng
Whan that he shulde out of the chambre go
Soone after this, a forlonge way or two
He priuely had tolde all his entent
Unto a man, and to his wyfe him sent.

In maner of a sergeant was this priuy mã
The whiche he faythfull oft founde had
In thinges great, & eke suche folke well can
Done execution of thynges baddé
The lorde knew well, he him loued & dradde
And whé this sergeant wyste his lordes will
In to the chambre he stalked him ful styll.

¶ Madame he sayd, ye mote forgyue it me
Though I do thing, which I am cõstrayned
Ye be ful wise, and full well knowe ye
That lordes hestes may not be fayned
They may well be wayted and complayned
But men muste nedes unto her lust obey
And so wol I, there nys no more to sey.

¶ This childe I am cõmaunded to take
And spake no more, but vp the childe he hent
Dispitously, and gan a chere to make
As though he wold haue slayne it or he went
Grisylde must all suffer, and consent
And as a lambe, she sitteth meke and still
And let this cruel sergeant do his wyll.

¶ Suspect was the fame of this man
Suspecte his face, suspecte his worde also
Suspecte the tyme in whiche he this began
Alas her doughter, that she loued so
Dre wende he wolde haue slayn it right tho
But natheles, she neither wept ne siked
Conforming her to that the Markes liked.

¶ But at the laste to speke she began
And meekely she the sergeant prayde
(So as he was a worthy gentell man)
That she might kysse her childe er þ it deyde
And in her barme, this litell childe she leyde
With ful sadde face, and gan the childe blisse
And lulled it, and after gan it kysse.

¶ And thus she sayd in her benigne voyce
Farwell my childe, I shall the neuer se
But sithé I haue marked the with þ croyce
Of thilke father yblyssed mote thou be
That for vs dyed vpon the roode tree
Thy soule litell childe, I hym betake
For this night shall thou dyen for my sake.

¶ I trowe that to a norice in this caas
It had ben harde, this routhe for to se
Wel might a mother than crye alas
But natheless, so sadde and stedfast was she
That she endured all her aduersite
And to the sergeant meekely she sayde
Haue here ayen your litel yonge mayde

And goth now (qd she) as doth my lordes hest
And o thing wold I pray you of your grace
But if my lorde forbyd it you at the lest
Burieth this litell body in some place
That no bestes ne birdes it to race
But he no word to that purpose woulde say
But tok the childe and went anon his way.

¶ This sergeaunt came to the lorde agayne
And of Grisildes wordes, and of her chere
He told him worde by worde, chort & playne
And him presented with his doughter dere
Somwhat this lord had routh i his manere
But natheless his purpose held he styll
As lordes don, whé they wol haue her wyll.

¶ And badde the sergeaunt that full priuely
He shuld this child wel kepe winde & wrappe
With all the circumstaunce tenderly
And carye it in a cofer, or in a lappe
But on payne of his heed of to swappe
That no man shulde knowe of his entent
Ne whence he came, ne whyther he went

¶ But at Boleyne, to his suster dere
That thilke tyme of Panye was countesse
He shulde it take, and she we her this matere
Beseching her to done her busyneste
This childe to fostre in all genteinesse
And whose childe þ it was, he bad her hyde
Fró euery wight, for ought þ might betyde

This sergeãt goth, & hath fulfilled this thig
But to this Markes nowe retourne we
For

For nowe goeth he ful ofte imaginyng
If by his wiues chere, he might se
Or by her wordes, perceyue that she
Were chaunged, but he neuer coude fynde
But euer in one lyke sadde and kynde.

As glad, as humble, as busy in seruage
And eke in loue, as she was woont to be
Was she to hym, in euery maner wyse
Ne of her doughter one worde spake she
None accident, for none aduersyte
Was sene in her ne neuer, her doughters name
Nempned she, for ernest ne for game.

Explicit tertia pars: Et
incipit pars quarta.

In this estate, passed ben foure yere
Er she with childe was, but as god wolde
A man childe she bare by this Walter
Ful gracious, and fayre to beholde
And when folke it to the father tolde
Not onely he, but all the countre merye
Was for the childe, & god they thonke & hery

When it was two yere olde, & from the brest
Departed from his norice on a day
This Markes cought yet another lest
To tempten his wife efte sones, if he may
O nedeles was she tempted, I dare wel say
But wedded men ne conne no mesure
When they fynde a pacient creature.

Wife (qd this Markes) ye haue herd or this
My people hewely beareth our mariage
And namely sythen my sonne borne is
Nowe is it worse than euer in our age
The murmure sleeth my herte & my corage
For to myn eres cometh the voyce so smerte
That it wel nye distroyed hath my herte.

Nowe say they thus, when Walter is agone
Than shall the blode of Janicola succede
And ben our lorde, for other haue we none
Suche wordes say my people, it is no drede
Wel ought I of suche murmure take hede
For certaynely I dred suche sentence
Though they not plainly speke in myn audience

I wold lyue in peace, if that I might
Wherfore I am disposed vtterly
As I his suffer serued by nyght
Right so I thinke to serue hym priuely
This warne I you, that ye not sodeynly
Out of your selfe, for no wo shulde outrayn
Bethe pacient, and therof I you prayn.

I haue (qd she) sayd, and euer shall
I wol ne nyl nothing certayne
But as you lyste: Nought greueth me at all
Though ỹ my doughter & my sone be slayne
At your cõmaundement: this is to sayne
I haue had no parte of childryn twayne
But first sickenesse, and after wo and payne.

Ye ben our lorde, doth ỹ your owne thing
Right as you lyst, and taketh no rede of me
For as I left at home my clothyng
When I came first to you, right so (qd she)
Lefte I my wyll, and all my lyberte
And toke your clothing: wherfore I you pray
Do your wyll, I wolde it obay

And certes, if I had prescience
Your will to know, er ye your lust me tolde
I wolde it done, without negligence
But now I wote your lust, & what ye wolde
All your pleasaunce, firme & stable I holde
For wist I that my deth wolde don you ese
Gladly wolde I suffer it you to plese

Deth may make no comparisoun
Vnto your loue: and when this Markes say
The cõm... of his wife, he caste adoun
His eyen two: and wondred howe she may
In suche pacience, suffereth all thys aray
And forth he goeth, with drery countenaũce
But to his herte, it was full great plesaũce

This eyger sergeaunt, in the same wise
That he her doughter caught, right so he
Or worse, if he coude worse deuyse
Hath hent her sonne, ỹ was ful of beaute
And euer in one so pacient was she
That she no chere made of heuinesse
But kissyth her child, and after gã him blisse

Saue this she prayd him, if that he might
Her litel sonne he woulde in erthe graue
His tender lymmes, delycate to syght
Fro foules and fro bestes to saue
But she none answere of hym might haue
He went his way, as he nothyng tought
But to Bolayne he tenderly it brought.

This Markes wondred euer lenger ỹ more
Upon her pacience, and yf that he

He had fothely hadwon there before
That parfytely her childzen loued he
He wold haue wende, that for some subtelte
And of malyce, or cruel corage
That he had suffred this with sad vysage

But he knewe wel, þ̄ere him selfe certayne
She loued her childzen best, in euery wyse
But nowe of women wold I aske fayne
If these assayes myght not suffyse
What couthe a sturdy husbonde more deuise
To preue her wyfehode, and her stedfastnesse
But be contynuyng euer in sturdinesse.

But there be folke of suche condicion
That whā they han a certayne purpose take
They couth not stynt of her entencyon
But as they were bounden to a stake
They wol not of that purpose slake
Right so this Markes, hath fully purposed
To tempt his wyfe, as he was first disposed

He wayteth, if by wordes or countenaunce
She were to him chaunged of corage
But neuer could he fynde variaunce
She was aye in one here and vysage
And euer the further that she was in age
The more trewe (if it were possyble)
She was to him in loue, and more penyble.

For which it semeth thus, that of hem two
There nas but one wyl: for as Walter lest
The same lust was her plesaunce also
And god be thonked, al fel for the best
She shewed wel, for no worldly unrest
A wyfe, as for her selfe, nothyng sholde
Wylen in effecte, but as her husbond wolde

The slaūder of Walter, wōder wyde spradd
That of cruel herte, ful wrecchedly
(For he a pore woman wedded had)
Hath murdred both his childzen prively
Which murmure was among hem comenly
No wonder was: for to the peoples ere
Ther cāe no word, but þ̄ they murdred were

For which, there as his people ther byfore
Had loued hi wel, disclaūdred of his defame
Wade hem, that they hated him therfore
To ben a murtherer is an hateful name
But natheleſſe, for ernest ne for game
He of his cruel purpose wold not stente
To tempt his wyfe, was al his entent.

Whan þ̄ his doughter. xii. yere was of age
He to the court of Rome, in subtel wyse
(Enfourmed of his wyl) sent his message
Cōmaundyng hem, suche bylles to deuyse
As to his cruel purpose may suffise
Howe that the pope, for his peoples reste
Bad him wedde another, if that him leste.

I saybe bad, they shuld counterfete
The popes bulle, makyng mencyon
That he hath leue, his first wife to lete
As by the popes dispensacyon
To stynte rancoure and dissencion
Betwixt his people & him, thus spake þ̄ bull
The whiche they han publissched at the full.

The rude people, as no wonder nys
Wenden ful wel, it had ben right so
But whan these tydinges come to Grisyldis
I deme, that her herte was full wo
But she was ryche sadde euermo
Disposed was this humble creature
The aduersyte of fortune to endure

Abydyng euer his lustes and his plesaunce
To whom she was yeuen, herte and all
As to her worldly sufficiaunce
But certaynly, if I this story tel shall
This Markes ywritten hath in speciall
A letter, in which he shewed his entent
And priuely, he it to Bolayne sent.

To the erle of Pauy, which that had tho
Wedded his suster: he prayde specially
To bringen him ayen his childzen two
In honorable estate al openly
But one thyng he him prayde al utterly
That he to no wight, thouz men wold enquere
Shuld tellen whose childzen they were

But say þ̄ the mayden shulde wedded be
Unto the Markes of Saluce anone
And as the erle was prayde, so dyd he
For at a day yfet, he on his way is gone
Toward Saluce, a lordes many one
In ryche aray, this mayden for to gyde
Her yong brother ridyng by her syde

Arayed was toward her mariage
This maiden fresshe, ful of gemmes clere
And her brother, that seuen yere was of age
Arayed was eke freshely in his manere
And thus in great noblesse and glad chere

Towarde Saluce, thapen her iourney
Fro day to day, as lyth for her way.

Explicit quarta pars: Et sequitur pars quinta.

Among al this, after his wicked vsage
This Walter his wife yet to tempten more
(To the vttereft proffe of her corage
Fully to haue experience and lore
If that she were as stedfast (as before)
He on a day in open audyence
Ful boystously hath said her this sentence.

Certes Grisyld, I had ynough of plesaūce
To han you to my wyfe, for your goodnesse
And for your trouth, and your obeysaunce
Not for your lynage, ne for your rychesse
But I now know in very sothfastnesse
That in great lordshyp, if I me wel auise
There is great seruitude in sondry wyse.

I may not done, as euery ploughman may
My people me constrayneth for to take
Another wife, and crien day by day
And eke the pope, this rancoure for to slake
Consenteth it, that dare I vndertake
And truely, thus much I wol you say
My new wife is comyng by the way.

Be stronge of hert, auoyde anon her place
And thilke dowery that ye brought to me
Take it ayen, I graunt it of my grace
Retourneth to your fathers house (quod he)
No man may alway haue prosperite
With euen hert, I rede you to endure
The stroke of fortune, or of auenture.

And she ayen answerd in patience:
My lord (quod she) I wote and wyste alway
How that bytwyxt your magnificence
And my pouert, no man can ne may
Maken no comparyson, it is no nay
I helde me neuer digne in no manere
To den your wyfe, ne yet your chamberere

And in this house, there ye me lady made
(The hie god take I, as for my witnesse
And al so wysely, as he my soule glad)
I helde me neyther lady ne maystresse
But humble seruaunt to your worthynesse
And euer shal, whyle my lyfe may endure
Aboven euery worldly creature

That ye so long of your benignite
Haue holde me in honour and noblay
(Where I was not worthy for to be)
That thonke I god & you, to whom I pray
So yelde it you, there is no more to say
Unto my father gladly wol I wende
And with him dwel to my lyues ende

There I was fostred of a childe ful smal
Til I be deed, my lyfe there wol I lede
A wydowe clene in herte, body and al
For sythen I yaue to you my maydenhede
And am your trewe wife, it is no drede
God shylde suche a lordes wyfe to take
Another man, to husbonde or to make.

And of your new wife, god of his grace
So graunt you weith and high prosperite
For I wol gladly yelde her my place
In which I was blyssful wont to be
For sithen it lyketh you my lorde (quod she)
(That whylom weren all my hertes reste)
That I shal gon: I shal go whan you leste.

But there as ye me proffred such doweyre
As I first brought, it is wel in my mynde
It were my wrecched clothes, nothing fayre
The which to me now were ful hard to fynde
Ah, good god: how gentil and how kynde
Ye semed by your speche and your vsage
The day that maked was our mariage.

But soth is said, algate I fynde it trewe
For in effecte it is proued now on me
Loue is not olde, as whan it is newe
For certes lorde, for none aduersyte
To dyen in this caas, it shal neuer be
That euer in word or worke I shall repent
That I you yaue myn hert in good entent

My lorde ye wote, that in my fathers place
Ye dyd me strippe out of my poore wede
And richely ye clad me of your grace
To you brought I naught els out of drede
But fayth, nakednesse, and maydenhede
Eut here ayen your clothyng I restore
And eke my wedding ringe for euermore

The remnaunt of your iewels redy be
Within your chambre, dare I safely sayne
Naked out of my fathers house (quod she)
I came: and naked I mote turne agayne
Al your plesaunce wold I folow fayne

But yet I hope it be not youre entent
That I smockelesse out of your paleys went

Ye coulde not do so dishoneste a thyng
That like wombe, in whiche your childe lay
Shulde before the people, in my walking
Be sene al bare: wherfore I you pray
Let me not lyke a wozme go by the way
Remembreth you myn owne lozd so dere
I was your wife, though I unworthy were

Wherfore in rewarde of my maydenhede
Which I to you brought, & not ayen bere
Is vouchesafe to yeue me to my mede
But such a smocke as I was wont to were
That I therwith may wrie ỳ wombe of here
That was your wife: & here I take my leue
Of you, myne own lozde, lest I you greue.

The smocke (qd he) that ỹ haste on thy backe
Let it be styl, and bere it forth with the
But wel bewareth that wozde he spake
But went his way, for routhe al pyte
Before the folke her self stryppeth she
And in her smocke, with foote & heed all bare
Toward her fathers house forth is she fare

The folke folowed wepyng in her wey
And fortune euer they cursed as they gone
But she fro wepyng kept her eyen dzey
Ne in this time, wozde spake she none
Her father, that this tidingrs herde anone
Curssed the day and tyme, that nature
Shope him to ben a lyues creature.

For out of doute, this olde pore man
Was euer suspecte of her mariage
For euer he demed, sythen it began
That whan the lozde ystyled had his corage
Him wold thinke it was a disparage
To his estate, so lowe for to alyght
And boyden her, as sone as euer he might.

Hyrself his doughter hastely goth he
(for he by ỳ noyse of folke knew her cõming)
And with her olde cote, as it might be
Ye couered her, ful sore wepyng
But on her body might he it not bring
For rude was the cloth, & she more of age
By dayes fele than was her mariage.

Thus with her father, for a certayne space
Dwelleth this flore of wifely pacience
That neuer by her wordes, nor by her face
Byfore the folke, ne eke in absence
Ne shewed she, that her was done offence
Ne of her hye estate no remembraunce
Ne had she, as by her countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in her great estate
Her gost was euer in playne humilyte
No tender mouth, ne hert delycate
Ne pompe, ne semblaunce of roialte
But ful of pacyence and benygnite
Discrete, and prudente, and aye honorable
And to her husbande euer meke and stable.

Men spoke of Job, & most of his bũtee
As clerkes (whan hem lyst) can wel endyte
Namely of men: but in sothfastnesse
Though clerkes praysse women but a lyte
There can no mã in humblesse hem aquite
As women can: ne be halfe so true
As women ben, but it befall of newe.

Explicit quinta pars: et sequitur pars sexta.

Fro Boloyne is the Erle of Pauy come
Of whiche the fame spronge to more & lesse
And to the peoples eeres, al and some
Was couthe eke, how a newe Marquesesse
He wt him brought, in pompe & suche richesse
That was neuer sene with mannes eye
So noble aray, in west Lumbardye.

The Markes, that shope & knewe al this
Er ỳ this Erle was come, sent his message
To thylke poore and sely Grisyldis
And she with humble hert, & glad vysage
Not with swellyng hert in her corage
Came at his heste, & on her knees her sette
And reuerently and wysely she him grette.

Grisylde (qd he) my wyll is vtterly
This mayde, that wedded shal be vnto me
Receyued be to morowe al so royally
As it is possyble in my house to be
And eke that euery wyght in his degre
Haue his estate in syttyng and seruyse
And also plesaunt, as ye can best deuise.

I haue no woman sufficient certayne
The chambres for to aray in ordynaunce
After my lust, and therfore wold I faine
That thyn were all suche gouernaunce

Thou knowest eke of olde al my pleasaunce
Though thyne aray be bad, and yuel besey
Do thou thy deuer at the leste wey.

Not onely lorde that I am glade (qd she)
To done your lust, but I desyre also
Yow for to please, and serue in my degre
Withouten fayntyng, and shal euer mo
Ne neuer for no wele, ne for no wo
Ne shal the gost within my hert stent
To loue you best, withal my trewe entent

And with ỳ word, she gan the house to dight
And tables to set, and beddes to make
And payned her to done al that she myght
Praying the chamberers for gods sake
To haste hem, and fast swepe and shake
And she the most seruysable of hem all
Hath euery chambre arayed, and his hall.

Abouten vndren gan this erle alyght
That wt hi brought these noble childrẽ twey
For which the people ran to se that syght
Of her aray, so ryche ly besey
And than at erste amonges hem they sey
That Walter was no foole, though him lest
To chaunge his wife: for it was for the best

For she is fayrer, as they demen all
Than is Grisylde, and more tender of age
And fayrer frute bytwene hem shall fall
And more pleasaunce, for her hye lynage
Her brother eke, so fayre was of his age
That hi to seen ỳ people had cauzt plesaũce
Comending now the Markes gouernaunce.

O sterne people, brisad and vntrewe
Ye vnsyttre, and chaungyng as a fane
Delityng euer in rumer that is newe
For lyke the moone euer waxe ye & wane
Euer ful of clappyng, dere ynough a lane
your dome is false, your cõstaũce nel preueth
A ful greate foole is he that on you leueth

Thus fayden sad folke in that cyte
Whan that the people gased vp and doun
For they were glad, right with the noueite
To haue a newe lady of her toun
No more of this make I now mencioun
But to Grisylde ayen wol I me dresse
And tellen her constaunce, and her busyneste.

Wel busy was Grisylde on euery thyng
That to the fest was appertinent
Right nauzt was she abashed of her clothing
Though they were rude, & somwhat to rent
But with glad chere, to the yate is went
With other folke, to greten the Marquesse
And after boch she loyth her busyneste

With right glad chere, ỳ grũtes she receiueth
And vpomly, euerich in his degre
That no man defaute there perceyueth
But euer they wondren, what she might be
That in so poze aray was for to se
And could such honour, and reuerence
And wozthyly they praysen her prudence.

In all the meane while she ne stente
This mayden & eke her brother to cõmende
With al her hert, and bemygie entente
So wel, that no man could her prise amende
But at the last, whan these lordes wende
To syttyn adown to meate, he gan to call
Grisylde, as she was busy in the hall.

Grisylde (qd he) as it were in his play
Howe lykeih the my wyfe, and her beaute
Right wel my lorde (qd she) for in good fay
I fayrer sawe I neuer none than she
I pray to god so yeue you prosperite
And so hope I, that he wol to you sende
Plesaunce ynough, vnto your lyues ende

But one thing I beseche, & warne also
That ye prike with no turmentyng
This tender mayden, as ye han do mo
For she is fostred in her norisshyng
More tenderly, in my supposyng
She could not aduersite endure
As could a pore fostred creature.

And whan this Walter sawe her pacience
Her glad chere, and no malyce at all
And he so ofte hath done her offence
And she aye constant, and stable as a wall
Continuing euer her innocence ouer all
This sturdy Markes, gan his hert dresse
To rewe vpon her wyfely stedfastnesse.

This is ynough, Grisylde myne (qd he)
Be no more agast, ne yuell apayde
I haue thy fayth, and thy benignite
As well as euer woman was assayde
In greate estate, or pozely arayde
Now know I dere wyfe thy stedfastnesse

And

and her in armes toke, and gan to kesse.

¶ And she for wonder, toke therof no kepe
She herde not what thing he to her sayde
She fared as she had sterte out of her slepe
Til she out of her madenesse abrayde
Griselde (qd he) by god that for vs deyde
Thou art my wyfe, and none other I haue
Ne neuer had, as god my soule saue

This is thy doughter, which y hast supposed
To ben my wife, and none other feythfully
And this shall be min heyr, as I haue disposed
Thou bare hem in thy body truely (sed
At Bologne haue I kept hem syker ly
Take hem ayen, for now mayst thou not say
That y hast lorne any of thy childre tway.

¶ And folke, that other wyse han sayd of me
I warne hem wel, y I haue done this dede
For no malyce, ne for no cruelte
But for to assay in the thy womanhede
And not for to sley my children, god forbede
But for to kepen hem priuely and styll
Til I thy purpose knewe, & all thy wyll

whā she this herd, a swoune down she falleth
For pitous ioy, & after her swounyng
She both her yong children to her calleth
And in her armes, pitously wepyng
Embraced hem bothe, tenderly kyssyng
Ful lyke a mother, with her salte teeres
She bathed both her vysage and her heeres

¶ O which a pytous thyng it was to se
Her swounyng, & her pytous voyce to here
Graūt mercy lorde, god thōke it you (qd she)
That ye haue saued me my children dere
Now recke I neuer to be deed right here
Sythen I stōd in your loue, & in your grace
No force of deth, ne whan my spirite pace.

¶ O tendre, O dere, O yong children myne
Your woful mother wende stedfastly
That cruel hounes, or some foule vermyne
Had eten you, but god of his mercy
And your benigne father, so tenderly
Hath done you kepen, in that same stounde
Al sodaynly she swapte down to the grounde.

¶ And in her swounyng, so sadly holdeth she
Her children two, whan she gan hem embrace
That with great sleyght and difficulte
The children from her armes they gan to race
O many a tere, on many a pytous face
Downe ran, of hem that stoden there besyde
Vnneth about her myght no man abyde.

¶ Walter her gladdeth, & her sorow slaketh
She ryseth vp all abashed from her traunce
And euery wight her ioy and feest maketh
Til she hath caught ayen her countynaunce
Walter her doth so faythfully plesaunce
That it was deintie to seen the chere
Betwyxt hem two, whā they were met ifere

¶ These ladyes, whan they her tyme sey
Han taken her, and into chaumbre gon
And stryppen her out of her rude arrey
And in a clothe of gold, that bryght shone
With a crowne of many a riche stone
Upon her heed, they her in to hall brought:
And there she was honoured as she ought.

¶ Thus hath this pytous day a blisful ende
For euery man and woman dothe his might
This day in myrth and reuel to dispende
Til on the welken shone the sterres bryght
For more solempne, in euery mannes syght
This feest was, and greater of costage
Than was the reuel of her mariage.

¶ Ful many a yere, in hye prosperite
Lyuen these two, in concorde and in rest
And richely his doughter maried he
Unto a lorde, one of the worthyest
Of al Itayle, and than in peace and rest
His wyues father in his courte he kepte
Til that his soule out of his body crepte.

¶ His sonne succedeth in his heritage
In rest and peace, after his fathers day
And fortunate was eke in mariage
All put he not his wyfe in great assay
This world is not so strong, it is no nay
As it hath ben in olde tymes yore
And herkneth what thauntour sayth therfore.

This story is said, not for ỹ wyues shold
Folowen Griselde, as in humylite
For it were importable tho they wold
But that euery wight in his degre
Shulde be constaunt, in al aduersite
As was Griselde, wherfore Petrarke writeth
This storie, which to hye style he endyteth

¶ For sith a woman was so patient
Unto a mortall man, wel more we ought
Receyue al in gree that god hath sent
For great skyll is preuyd that he wrought
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought
As saith saint Jame, if ye his pistel rede
He preueth folke but a day, it is no drede

¶ And suffreth vs as for our exercyse
With sharpe scourges of aduersite
Ful ofte to be beaten, in sondrie wyse
Not for to knowe our wyl, for certes he
Or we were borne, knewe al our frele
And for our best, is al his gouernaunce
Let vs ther fore thank in vertuous suffraunce

But one word herkeneth lordynges or ye go
It were ful harde to fynde nowe a dayes
In al a countre Griseldes thre or two
For if they were put to suche assayes
The gold of hem hath so bad a layes
With brasse, for though it be fayre at eye
It wolde rather brast a two than playe

¶ For which here, for ỹ wiues loue of Bathe
Whose life and structe, mighty god maynteine
In hygh maistry, or elis were it scathe
I wyl with lusty hert, fresshe and greene
Say you a song, to glad you I weene
And let vs stynte of ernest matere
Herkeneth my song, ỹ saith in this manere.

¶ Lenuoye de Chaucer a les
mariz de nostre temps

Griselde is dede, and eke her
patience
And both at ones buryed in
Itayle
For which I crye in open audience
No wedded man be so hardy to assayle
His wyues patience, in trust to fynde
Griseldes, for in certayne he shal fayle.

¶ O noble wyues, ful of hye prudence
Let no humilite your tonge nayle
Ne let no clerke haue cause ne diligence
To write of you a storie of suche mervayle
As of Griselde, pacient and kynde
Lest Chechifache swalow you in her entrayle

¶ Folowyth Cato, that bideth no silence
But euer answereth at the countre tayle
Beth not abasshed for your innocence
But sharpely taketh on you the gouernayle
Emprynteth wel this lesson in your mynde
For comen profyte, sith it may auayle

¶ Me bideth nemmot, both hem no remorse
For though thin hatbarde armed be in mayle
The arrowes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eke his auentayle
In ielousye eke, loke thou him bynde
And ỹ shal make him couch as doth a quayle

¶ If ỹ be sayde, there folke ben in present
Shewe thou thy visage, & thyn apparayle
If thou be foule, be fre of thy dispence
To ger the frendes aye do thy trauayle
Be aye of chere, as lyght as lefe on lynde
And let him care, wepe, wringe, and waylle.

¶ Ye archwiues, stodeth aye at your defence
Syth ye be strong, as is a great camayle
Ne suffreth not, that men do you offence
And ye shrewes ybyrs, feble as in batayle
Beth eygre as any tygre is in Inde
Ye clappeth as a mylle, I you counsayle.

¶ Here endeth ỹ clerkes tale of Oxe-
forde, and here folowyth the
wordes of our host.

This worthy clerk, whil ended was his tale
Our host sayd ỹ swore by cockes bones
Me were leuer than a barel of ale
My wife at home had herd this legende ones
This is a gentle tale for the nones
As to my purpose, wyste ye my wyll
But thing that wol not be, let it be styll.

¶ Here endeth the wordes of our hoste,
and here folowethe the Fran-
keleyns prologue.

These olde gentyll bretons in
dayes
Of dyuers aventures maden
layes
Rymed in her moder
tonge
Which layes, ỹ her instrumentes they song
Or elis redden hem for her plesaunce
And one of hem haue I in remembraunce
Which I shal say, as wyllyng as I can.

But

But first, bicause I am a boȝe man
In my begynnyng first I you beseche
Haue me excused of my rude speche
I lerned neuer rethorike certayne
Thing I speke, most be bare and playne
I slept neuer on the mounte of Pernaso
Ne lerned neuer Marcus Tullius Cicero
Colours ne know I none, withouten drede
But swiche colours as growen in the mede
Oȝ elis swiche as men dyen oȝ paynte
Colours of rhetorike, ben to me quaynte
My spirite frieth not of swiche matere
This is my tale, if ye wol it here.

Here endeth the Frankeleyns prologue.

Here begynneth the Frankeleyns tale.

In Armorike, that called is Britayne
There was a knighte, that loued and did his payne
To serue ladyes in his best wyse
And many a labour, and many a great empryse
He foȝ his lady wrought, er she were wonne
For she was one the fayrest vnder sonne
And eke therto comen of hye kynrede
That wel vneth durst this knighte foȝ drede
Telle her his wo, his payne, and his distresse
But at the laste, she of her worthynesse
And namely foȝ his meke obeysaunce
Hath suche a pyte caught of his penaunce
That pryuely she fyll of his accoȝde
To take him foȝ her husbonde and her loȝde
Of swich loȝdship, as men haue ouer her wiues
And foȝ to lede in the more honeste her lyues
Of his free wyl, he swoȝe her as a knyghte
That neuer in al his lyfe, day ne nyghte
He shuld he take vpon him no maistrye
Agayne her wyl, ne kythe her ielousye
But her obey, and folowe her wyl in all
As any louer to his lady shall
Saue that the name of soueraynte
That wold he haue, foȝ shame of his degre.
She thonked him, ful with ful great humblesse
She said: sir, sythe of your gentylnesse
Ye profred me to haue so large a rayne
Ne wold god neuer betwixt vs twayne
As in my gylte, were eyther werre oȝ stryfe
Sir, I wol be your trewe humble wife
Haue here my trouth, tyl that my herte breste
Thus ben they bothe in quiet and in reste.
For one thing sirs, safely dare I seyne
That frendes, euery che other must obeyne
If they wol longe holden compayne
Loue wol not be constrayned by maistrye
When maistry cometh, the god of loue anon
Beateth his winges, and farewell he is gon
Loue is a thinge, as any spirite free
Women of kynde desiren liberte
And not to be constrayned as a thrall
And so done men, if I sothe saye shall
Loke who that most patient is in loue
He is at his auauntage all aboue
Patience is an hye vertue certayne
For it venquisheth, as these clerkes sayne
Thynges that rygour shall neuer attayne
For euery woȝd, me may not chide oȝ playne
Learneth to suffer, oȝ elis, so mote I gone
Ye shall it lerne whether ye woll oȝ none
For in this woȝld certayne, no wight ther is
That he ne doth oȝ sayeth somtyme amys
Ire, sickenesse, oȝ constellacion
Wyne, woo, oȝ chaungyng of complexcion
Causeth ful ofte, to don amisse oȝ speken
On euery wrong, a man may not be wreken
After the tyme, must be temperaunce
To euery wight that can of gouernaunce
And therfoȝe, hath this worthye wise knight
To lyue in ease, suffraunce her hight
And she to him ful wysely gan swere
That neuer shoulde ther be default in here
Here may men se, humble and wise accoȝde
Thus hath she take her seruaunt and her loȝde
Seruaunte in loue, and loȝde in mariage
Than was he bothe in loȝdship and seruage
Seruage: nay, but in loȝdeship aboue
Sithen he hath bothe his lady and hys loue
His lady certes, and hys wyfe also
The whiche that lawe of londe accoȝdeth to
And when he was in thys prosperite
Home with his wife he goth, in to his contre
Nat fer fro Pẽmarke, ther his dwelling was
Where as he lyueth in ioye and solas
Who coude tell, but he had wedded be
The ioy, the ease, and the prosperyte
That is betwixt an husbonde and his wife
Euermoȝe lasted thys blyssful lyfe
Til that this knight, of which I speke thus
That of Caerr Iudas, was cleped Arueragus
Shope him to dwel, a yere oȝ twayne (gus
In Engiond, that cleped was Britayne

To seken in armes worship and honour
For all his lust he sette in suche labour
And dwelt ther two yere, the boke saith thus
¶ Nowe will I stynt of thys Arueragus
And speke I will of Dorigen his wyfe
That loueth her husbonde as her herres life
For his absence, wepeth she and syketh
As doth these noble wyues when hem lyketh
She mourneth, wayleth, fasteth, & playneth
Desire of his presence, her so constrayneth
That al thys wyde worlde set she at nought
Her frendes, which knewe her heuy thought
Conforten her, in all that euer they may
They preache her, and tellen her night & day
That causeles she slewe her selfe, alas
And euery comfort possible in this caas
They don to her, with all her busynesse
And al for to make her leue her heuynesse.
¶ By processe, as ye knowen euerychone
Men mowen so longe grauen in a stone
Tyll some figure therin ystyked be
So longe han they comforted her, tyll she
Receyued hath by hope and by reson
The emprynting of her condicion
Through which her gret sorow gan aswage
She may not alway enduren suche a rage
And eke Arueragus in all thys care
Hath sent his letters home of his welfare
And that he woll come hastely agayne
Or elis had this sorowe her herte slayne.
Her frendes sawe her sorowe gan to slake
And prayden her on knees, for goddes sake
To come and romen in her company
Away to dryuen her derke fantasye
And fynally she graunted that requeste
For well she sawe it was for the beste.
¶ Nowe stode her castell faste by the see
And often with her frendes walked she
Her to disporte on the bankes hye
Where as she many shyppes & barges sye
Sayling her course, where hem lyste go
But yet was that a parell of her wo
For to her selfe full oft alas sayde she
Is there no shyppe, of so many as I se
Wol bring home my lorde, thã were my herte
Warisshed of these bitter paynes smerte.
¶ Another tyme, wolde she sitte and thynke
And caste her eyen downwarde fro the brynke
But when she sawe the grysly rockes blake
For very feare, so wolde her herte quake
That on her fete she might not her susteine
Than wolde she sit adowne vpon the grene
And pytously in to the see beholde
And say right thus, with sorowful sikes colde
¶ Eterne god, that through thy purueyance
Ledest this world, by certeyne gouernance
In ydle as me sayn, dost thou nothing make
But lorde, these grysly feendely rockes blake
That semen rather a foule confusion
Of werke, than a fayre creacion
Of suche a parfite god, wyse and full stable
Why haue ye wrought this werk vnresonable
For by this werke, north, south, west, or este
Ther nys fostred, man, bryde, ne beste
It doth no good, but anoyeth
See ye not lorde, how mankinde it distroyeth
An hundred thousande bodies of mankynde
Haue rockes slayn, al be they not in mynde
Which mankind is so faire a part of thy werke
That thou it madest lyke thy owne werke
Than semed it ye had a great chertee
Towarde mankynde, but how thē may it be
That ye suche meres maken it to dystroyen
Which meres don no good, but euer anoyen.
I wote wel clerkes woll sayne as hem lest
By argumentes, that al is for the best
Though I ne can not the causes wel knowe
But thylke god, that made the wynde to blowe
As kepe my lorde, this is my conclusion
To clerkes lete I all this disputacion
And wolde god that all these rockes blake
Were sonke into hell for his sake.
These rockes slee myn heart for feare
Thus wold she say with many a pitous teare
Her frendes sawe it was for her no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort
And shapen hem to playn somwhere elles
They leden her by ryuers and by welles
And eke in other places delectables
They daunceu & they playen at the tables
So on a day, right in the morowe tyde
Vnto a gardayne, that was there besyde
In which that they had made her ordinaūce
Of vitayles, and other purueyaunce
They gon and playn hem al the longe day
And this was in the sixte morowe of May
Which may hath painted with his soft shoures
This gardayne ful of leues and of flowres
And craft of mannes honde so curiously
Arayed had this gardayne trucly
That neuer nas there garden of suche pryse
But yf it were the very paradyse
The odour of flowres, and the freshe sight
Wolde haue made any herte light
That euer was born, but if to great sickenes
Or to great sorowe helde it in distresse

So

So was it full of beaute, with plesaunce.
And after dinner gonne they daunce
And singe also, saue Dorigene alone
That yet vnto her selfe made her mone
For she ne sey hym on the daunce go
That was her husbonde, and her lone also
But natheless, she must her tyme abyde
And with good hope, let her sorowe slyde.
¶ Upon this daunce, amonge other men
Daunced a squier before Dorigen
That fresher was, and iolyer of aray
As to my dome, then is the moneth of May
He singeth, & dauncth, passing euery man
That is or was, sithen the worlde began
And therwithall, & men shulde him discryue
One of the best farynge men on lyue
Yonge, stronge, vertuous, ryche, and wyse
And wel beloued, and holden of great pryse
And shortely, if I the sothe tell shall
Unwitting of thys Dorigen at all
This lusty squier, seruaunt to Venus
Whiche ycleped was Aurelyus
Had loued her beste of any creature
Two yere and more, as was his auenture
But neuer durst he tell her hys grenaunce
Withouten cuppe he dronke al his penaunce
He was dispayred, nothing durst he say
Saue in his songes, somwhat wold he wray
His wo, as in generall complayning
He sayd he loued, and was beloued nothing
Of whiche matere made he many layes
Songes, complayntes, roundels, virelayes
How that he durst not his sorowe tell
But languyshe, as dothe a fury in hel
And dye he muste (he sayd) as dyd Ecco
For Narcissus, that durst not tell hys wo.
¶ In other maner then ye herde me say
Ne durst not he to her his wo bewray
Saue parauenture somtyme at daunces
There yonge folke kepen her obseruaunces
It may well be, he loked on her face
In suche a wyse, as men that asken grace
But nothyng wiste she of his entent
Natheless eit happed, er they thence went
Because that he was her neighbour
And was a man of worthip and honour
And had knowen him oft tymes yore
They fell in speche, and so forth more & more
Unto his purpose than drowe Aurelius
And when he sawe his tyme he sayd thus.
Madame (qd he) by god yt this worlde made
So that I wyst, yt I might your hert glade
I wolde that day, that your Arueragus
Went ouer the see, that I Aurelyus
Had went ther yt I shuld neuer come againe
For wel I wote my seruice is in vayne
My guerdon nis but drestyng of myn hert
Madame rueth vpon my paynes smert
For with one worde ye may me slee or saue
Here at your fote god wolde yt I wer graue
I ne haue as nowe no leyser more to sey
Haue mercy swete, or ye wol do me dey.
¶ She gan to loke vpon Aurelyus
Is this your wyl (qd she) and say ye thus?
Neuer erst (qd she) ne wist I what ye ment
But nowe I knowe Aurelyus your entente
By thilke god, that yaue me soule and lyfe
Ne thal I neuer be vntrewe wyfe
In worde ne in werke, as far as I haue wyt
I wol ben hys to whom I am knyt
Take this for a fynall answere of me
But after this in playe thus sayd she.
¶ Aurelyus (qd she) by god aboue
yet wol I graunt you to ben your loue
(Sithen I se you so pytously complayne)
Loke what day that endelong Britayne
ye remeue all the rockes, stone by stone
That they ne let shyppe ne bote to gone
I say whē ye haue made these costes so clene
Of rockes, that there nis no stone yseene
Than wol I loue you best of any man
Here haue my trueth, in al that euer I can.
Is there none other grace in you (qd he?)
¶ No by that lorde (qd she) that maked me
For wel I wote that it shall neuer betyde
Let suche folye out of your hert glyde
What deyntie shulde a man haue in his lyfe
For to go loue another mannes wyfe?
That hath her body when so that him lyketh
¶ Aurelyus full oft sore syketh
Wo was Aurely, whan he thys herde
And with a sorouful chere he thus answerde
¶ Madame (qd he) thys were impossible
Then mote I dye on sodeyne dethe horrible
And with that worde he turned hym anone.
¶ Tho come her other frendes euerychone
And in the aleyes romeden vp and doun
And nothyng wyste of thys conclusion
But sodaynly began to reuell newe
Tyll that the bright sonne lost his hewe
For the orizont hath reft the sonne his lyght
This is as muche to say, as it was nyght
And home they gon in ioy and in solas
Saue onely wyretched Aurelyus, alas
He to his house is gon with sorowfull harte
He sayd he might not from his dethe astarte

Hym

Him semed, that he brite his hert colde
Up to heuen his houdes gan he holde
And on his knees bare, he set him adoun
And in his rauyng said this oryson
For very wo out of his witte he brayde
He nyst what he spake, but thus he sayde
With pitous hert hath his cõplaint begonne
Unto the goddes, and fyrst vnto the sonne
He said: god Apollo and gouernour
Of euery plante, herbe, tree, and flour
That yeuest after thy declinacion
To ilke of hem his time and ceson
As thyn herberow chaungeth low and hye
Lorde Phebus, cast thy mercyable eye
On wretched Aurelyus, which am but lorne
Lo lorde, my lady hath my deth ysworne
Wythout gylt, but thy benignyte
Upon my deedly hert haue some pite
For wel I wot lorde Phebus, if ye lelle
Ye may me helpe saue my lady belle
Now vouche ye saue, that I you deuyse
How that I maye be holpen & in what wyse.
Your blyssful suster Lucina the shene
That of the see is goddesse and quene
Though Neptunus hath deite in the see
yet emperesse aboue him is she
Ye knowen wel lord, right as her desyre
Is to be quickened & lyghted of your fyre
For whiche ye she folowyth you full besily
Right so the see desyreth naturally
To folowen her that is goddesse
Both of the see, and ryuers more and lesse
Wherfore lorde Phebus, this is my requeste
Do this myracle, or do myne hert breste
That now next at this opposycion
Which in sygne shal be the lyon
As prayeth her so great a flodde to bryng
That fyue fadome at the lest, it ouer spryng
The hyghest rocke in Armorike Britayne
And let this flodde dure yeres twayne
That certes to my lady may I say
Holdeth your best, the rockes ben away
This thing may ye lyghtly don for me
Pray her to gon no faster course than ye
I say thus, prayeth your suster that she go
No faster course than ye in yeres two
Than shal she be at the ful alwa?
And spryng floode lastyng both nyght & day
And bnt she vouchsafe in suche manere
To graunte me my souereine lady dere
Pray her to syuken euery rocke adoun
Into her owne derke regyoun
Under the ground, there Pluto dwelleth in
Or neuer more shall I my lady win
Thy temple in Delphos, wol I barfote seke
O lorde Phebus, se the teares on my cheke
And on my peyne haue some compassion
And with that word, in swoune he fel adoun
And longe tyme he lay in a traunce.
His brother, which ỳ knewe of his penaunce
Up caught hym, and to bed hym brought
Dispeyred in this turment and this thought
Lette I this woful creature lye
Chese he whether he wol lyue or dye.
Arueragus with heale and greate honour
(As he that was of chevalry the flour)
Is comen home, and other worthy men
O blissful art thou nowe Dorigen
That hast thy lusty husbonde in thyn armes
That fresh knight, ỳ worthy man of armes
That loueth the, as his own hertes lyfe
Nothing lyst him to be imagynatyfe
yf any wight had spoken (whyle he was out)
To her of loue, therof had he no dout
He entendeth not to suche matere
But daliaunce, as men to wyues dere
And thus in ioy & blysse I let hem dwel
And of woful Aurelyus wol I tel.
In langour and in turmente dispitous
Two yere and more, lay wretched Aurelyus
Er any foot on erthe he might gone
Ne comfort in this tyme had he none
Saue of his brother, whiche was a clerke
He knewe of al this wo and all this werke
For to non other creature certayn
Of this matere, durst he no worde sayn
Under his brest he bare it more secre
Then euer dyd Pamphilus for Galathe
His brest was hole without for to sen
But in his hert aye, was the arrowe keen
And wel ye knowen that of a sursanure
In surgery, is perylous the cure
But men might touch ỳ arow or coin therby
His brother weped and wayled pryuely
Til at the last him fel in remembraunce
That while he was at Orliãce in Fraunce
(As these clerkes ponge that ben lyberalle)
Ten degrees aren that ben curiouse
Seken in euery halke and in euery herne
Perticuler science for to lerne
He him remembred that vpon a day
At Orliaunce in studye a boke he sey
Of magike naturel, whiche his felawe
That was in that tyme a bacheler of lawe
Al were he there to lerne another craft
Had pryuely vpon his deske ylaft

Whiche boke spake of mochell operacions,
Touching the foure & twenty mansions
That longen to the moone, and suche folye
As in our dayes is not worthe a flye
For holy churche sayth in our byleue
He suffereth non illusion vs to greue
And whē this boke was in hys remēbraūce
Anon for ioye his herte gan daunce
And to him selfe he sayd pryuely
My brother shal be warisshed sykerly
For I am syker that there be sciences
By whiche men maken diuers aparences
Suche as these subtell tregetours play
For ofte at festes haue I well herde say
That tregetours, within an hall large
Haue made come in water and a barge
And in the hall rowen vp and doun
Somtyme hath semed a grym lyon
And somtyme flowres spring as in a mede
Somtyme a vyne, and grapes white & rede
Somtyme a castell of lyme and stone
And when hem lyked, voyden hem anon
Thus semed it to euery mannes syght.
Now then conclude I thus, if ỹ I myght
Of Orliaunce some olde felawe fynde
That had this moones mansions in mynde
Or other magyke naturall aboue
He shuld wel make my brother haue his loue
For with an apparaunce a clerke may make
To mannes syght, that all the rockes blake
Of Britayne, were vuoyded euerychone
And shippes by the brinke to comen & gone
And in suche forme enduren a yere or two
Then were my brother waryshed of his wo
Then must she nedes holde her behestе
Or elis he shall shame her at the leste.
What shulde I make a lenger tale of this
Unto his brothers bedde he comen is
And suche comforte he yaue hym for to gone
To Orliaunce, that he vp sterte anone
And on his way than is he forthe ystare
In hope to ben lessed of his care.
When they were comen almoste to ỹ cyte
(But if it were a two forlonge or thre)
A yonge clerke roming by him selfe they met
Whiche that in latyn thriftely hem gret
And afterwarde he sayd a wonder thyng
I knowe the cause of your cōmyng
And er they farther any fote weute
He tolde hem all that was in her entente
This Briton clerke asked him of felowes
The whiche he had knowen in olde dayes
He answerde hym, that they deed were
For whiche he wept ofte ful many a tere.
Downe of his horse Aurelyus light anon
And with this magicien forth is he gon
Home to his house, and made him wel at ese
Hem lacked no vitayle that hem might plese
So wel arayde an house as there was one
Aurelyus in his lyfe sawe neuer none.
He shewed him, or he went to suppere
Forestes and parkes, ful of wylde dere
He sawe there hertes, with hornes hye
The greatest that euer were sene with eye
He se of hem an hundred slayn with houndes
And some of arowes bled with bitter woundes
He sawe, when voyded were the wilde dere
These fauconers, vpon a fayre ryuere
That with the haukes hanthe heron slayne.
Tho sawe he knightes iustinge in a playne
And after this he dyd him suche plesaunce
That he him shewed his lady in a daunce
On which him selfe daūced as him thought
And whē this maister, ỹ this magike wrought
Sawe it was time, he clapped his hōdes to
And fare well our reuell, all was ago
And remeued neuer out of hys house
While they sawe al this sight merueylouse
But in his studye there hys bookes be
They saten styll, no wight but they thre.
To him this maister called hys squier
And sayde him thus, is redy our supper
Almoste an houre it is, I vndertake
Sithen I you bad our supper redy make
When that these worthy men went with me
Into my studye, there as my bokes be
Sir (qd the squier) whan it lyketh you
It is all redy, though ye wol ryght nowe.
Go we suppe than (qd he) for the best
These amorous folke sōtime mote haue rest
And after supper fell they in trete
What sōme shulde thys maister guerdon be
To remeue all the rockes of Britayne
And eke from Girōde to the mouth of sayne.
He made it strāge & swore so god him saue
Lasse thē a thousād ponde wold he not haue
Ne gladly for that sōme nolde he it don.
Aurelyus with blisfull herte anon
Answerde thus: Fye on a thousande poūde
This wyde world, which men say is rounde
I wolde it yeue, if I were lorde of it
Thys bargayne is full driue, for we be knit
Ye shal be payde truely by my trouthe
But loke nowe for no negligence or slouthe
Ye tarryen vs here no lenger then tomorowe
Nay (qd this clerke) here my trouth to borowe

To

¶ To bedde is gon Aurelius when him lefte
And well nye al night he had hys rest
What for hys labour, and his hope of blisse
Hys woful hert of penaunce had a lisse.
¶ Upon the morowe when that it was day
To Britayne toke they the right way
Aurelyus, and this magycyne hym beside
And ben dysended there they wolde abyde
And this was, as the boke doth remembre
In the colde frosty seson of Decembre.
¶ Phebus wexed olde, & hewed lyke laton
That afore in his hote declinacion
Shone as ỳ brenning gold, wt stremes bright
But now in Capricorne adowne he light
Where as he shone full pale, I dare wel sayne
The bitter frost, with the slydder rayne
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerde
Janus sit by the fire with double berde
And drynketh of his bugle horne the wine
Biforn him stont braune of the tusked swine
And nowel crieth every lusty man.
¶ Aurelius, in al that euery he can
Doth to his maister chere and reuerence
And prayeth him to don his diligence
To bringen him out of his paynes smerte
Or with a sword that he wold slyt his herte.
This clerke suche routh hath on this man
That night & day he spedeth him that he can
To wayte a time of his conclusion
This is to say, to make illusion
Or suche an apparyng or iogelrye
I ne can no termes of astrologye
That he and euery wight shuld wene & say
That of Britayne the rockes were away
Or elis they were sonken vnder the grounde
Thus at the laste he hath his time yfounde
To make his japes and hys wrechydnesse
Of suche superstitious cursydnesse
His tollyptan tables he forthe brought
Ful wel conrected, him lacked nought
Neither his collecte, ne hys expans yeres
Ne his rootes, ne his other geres
As ben hys centrys, and his argumentes
And hys proporcionel conuenyentes
For his equacions in euery thyng
And by his eyght speres in his werkyng
He knew ful wel how far ajnarth was shoue
Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries aboue
That in the nynth spere consyderred is
Ful subtelly he had calked all this
And when he had founde his first mansyon
He knewe the remnaunt by proporcyon
And knewe the rysyng of the moone wele
And in suche face, the terme and euery dele
And knewe also his other obseruaunces
For suche illusions and suche mischaunces
As ben vsed in thilke dayes
For which no man is holden ydelayes
But through his magike, for a whyle or twayn
It semed that al the rockes were away.
¶ Aurelius, whiche that dispeyred is
Whether he shal haue his loue, or fare amis
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle
And when he knewe there was non obstacle
But ỳ voyded were these rockes enryptyon
Downe to the maisters fete he fel anon
And sayd, I woful wrecche Aurelyus
Thanke you lorde and lady myn Venus
That me hath holpen fro my cares colde
And to ỳ temple his way forth hath he holde
Where as he knewe he shulde his lady se
And when he sawe his time, anon right he
With dredful hert, & with humble chere
Salued hath his sourrayne lady dere.
¶ My right ful lady (qd this woful man)
Whom I serue and loue, as I beste can
And lothest were of al this worlde displese
Nere it that I for you haue suche disese
That I muste dye here at your fete anon
Nought wold I tel you how wo is me begon
But certes either must I dye or playne
Ye slee me gylteles for very payne
But of my dethe, though ye haue no routhe
Auisen you, er that ye breken your trouthe
Repenteth you, for that ylke god aboue
For ye slee me, bycause that I you loue
For madame, wel ye wot that ye haue highte
Not that I chalenge any thyng of right
Of you my sourrayn lady, but of your grace
But in a garden yonde in suche a place
Ye wote right well what ye highte me
And in my honde your trouthe plighte ye
To loue me best, god wote ye sayd so
Al be it I am vnworthy therto
Madame I speke for the honour of you
More than for to saue my herte lyfe nowe
I haue done right as ye commaunded me
And ỳ ye vouchesafe, ye may go se
Doth as you lift, hauerth your trouthe in minde
For quick or dede, right there ye shal me finde
In you lyth all to do me lyue or dye
But well I wote the rockes ben awey
He toke hys leue, and she astonyed stode
In al her face there nas a droppe of blode
She wende neuer han come in such a trappe
Alas (qd she) that euer this shulde happe
For

for wende I neuer by possibilite
That such a miller or mervayle myght be
It is ayenst the processe of nature
And home she goth a sorowful creature
For very feare unnethes may she go
She weperth and wayleth a day or two
And swouneth, that it was routh to se
But why it was to no wight tolde she
For out of towne was gon Arviragus
But to her selfe she spake, and sayd thus
In her complayne, as ye shal after here
With face pale, & with sorowful chere.
Alas (qõ she) on the fortune I playne
That unware hath wrapped me in thi chaine
Fro which to escape, wot I no socoure
Save onely dethe, or elis dishonoure
One of these two behoueth me to chese
But nathelesse, yet had I leuer to lese
My lyfe, than of my body to have a shame
Or know my selfe false, or lese my name
And with my dethe, I may be quit iwis
Hath there not many a wyfe er this
And many a mayde, slayne her selfe alas
Rather than with her body done trespas
And certes lo, these stories bere witnesse
Whan thirty tyrantes, ful of cursydnesse
Had slayne Phidon, in Athenes at the fest
They cõmaunded his doughters to arest
And bringen hem byfore hem in despyte
Al naked, to fulfyl her foule delyte
And in her fathers blode, he dyd hem daũce
Vpõ the pauement, god yeve him mischaũce
For which these wofol maydens ful of drede
Rather thã they wold lesen her maydenhede
They prively ben sterte into a well
And drenched hem selfe, as bokes tell.
They of Messene let enquire and seke
Of Lacidomony fyfty maydens eke
On which they wold have done her lechery
But there was non of al that company
That she nas slayne, and with a glad entent
Chese rather for to dyen, than for to assent
To ben oppressed of her maydenhede
Why shuld I than to dye ben in drede.
Lo eke the tyraunt Aristocides
That loued a mayd, ỹ hight Stymphalydes
Whan that her father slayne was on a night
Unto Dyanes temple goth she anon right
And hent the ymage, with her armes two
Fro which image wold she never go
No wight might fro it her hondes race
Tyl she was slayne, right in the selfe place.
Now sithes ỹ maidens had such dispite
To ben defouled with mannes foule delyte
Wel ought a wyfe rather her selfe slee
Than be defouled, as thinketh me.
What shal I say of Hasdruballes wyfe
That at Cartage byraft her selfe her lyfe
For whã she sawe ỹ Romanes wan ỹ town
She toke her children al, and lepte adown
Into the fyre, and chese rather to dye
Than any Roman dyd her vilanye.
Hath not Lucrece slayne her selfe, alas
At Rome, there she oppressed was
Of Tarquyne, for her thought it was shame
To lyve, whan that she had lost her name.
The eyght maydens of Meletye also
Han slayn hem selue for very drede and wo
Rather thã folke of Gaule shuld hẽ oppresse
Who than a thousande stories, as I gesse
Couth I now tel as touching this matere.
Whã Abradas was slayn, his wife so dere
Her selfe slowe, and let her bloode to glyde
In Abradas woundes, brode and wyde
And sayd, my body at the lest way
There shal no wight defoule if I may.
What shuld I mo ensamples herof sayne.
Sythens that so many han hem selfe slayne
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be
I wol conclude that it is best for me
Wel rather slee my selfe in some manere
As dyd Demotious doughter dere
Bycause that she nolde not defouled be.
O Sedasus, it is full great pyte
To reden howe thy doughters dyden, alas.
That slowen hem selfe for such a maner caas
As great a pyte was it or wel more
The Theban maiden, that for Nichanore
For one of Macedone had her oppressed
With her deth her maydenhede she redressed
What shal I sayne of Nyterates wyfe
That for suche case biraft her selfe her lyfe.
How trew was eke to Alcibyades
His loue, that for to dyen rather chees
Than for to suffren his body vnburyed be.
Lo whiche a wyfe was Alceste (qõ she)
What saith Homere of good Penelope.
All Grece knoweth of her chastite.
Parde of Laodomia is writen thus
That whã at Troy was slayn Protheselaus
No lenger nolde she lyve after his day.
The same of noble Porcia tell I may
Withouten Brutus couthe she not lyve
To whom she had al her herte ygyve.
The parfyte wyfehode of Artemisy
Honoured is, throughout al Barbary

¶ Oh Thema quene, for wifely chaftyte
To al wyues may a myrrour be.
The same thing I say of Bilia
Of Nodogene, and eke Valeria.
¶ Thus playned Dorigene a day or tweye
Purpofyng euer that she wold dey
But natheleffe vpon the thirde nyght
Home came Arueragus, the worthy knight
And aſked her why she wepte fo fore
And she gan wepen euer lenger the more
¶ Alas (qd she) that euer was I borne
Thus haue I faid (qd she) thus haue I fworn
And tolde him al, as ye haue herde before
It nedeth not to reherce it no more.
¶ This huſbonde wt glad chere in gode wife
Anſwerd and ſaide, as I ſhal you deuiſe
Is there aught eis Dorigene but this.
Nay nay (qd she) god helpe me fo as wys
This is to moche, and it were goddes wyll.
¶ Ye wyfe (qd he) let ſlepe that is ſtyll
It may be wel yet paraventure to day
Ye ſhall your trouth holde by my fay
For god fo wyſly haue mercy on me
I had wel leuer ſtyched for to be
For very loue whiche that I to you haue
But if ye ſhulde your trouth kaue
Trouth is the beſt thing that mē may kepe
But with that word he brafi anon to wepe
And ſaid, I you forbyd on payne of dethe
That neuer whiles you laſteth lyfe or breth
To no wight tell of this miſaventure
As I may beſt I wol my wo endure
Ne make no countenaunce of heuyneſſe
That folke of you may deme harme ne geſſe
And forth he cleped a ſquier and a mayde
Goth forth anon with Dorigene he ſayde
And bringeth her in ſuch a place anone
They toke her leue, & on her way they gone
But they ne wyſte why ſhe thyder went
She holde no wight tel her entent.
¶ This ſquire, which that hyghte Aurelyus
On Dorigen, whiche that was ſo amerous
Of aventure happed her to mete
Amydde the towne, right in the hye ſtrete
As ſhe wold haue gon the way forth right
Towarde the garden, there as ſhe had hight
And he was to the garden warde alſo
For wel he ſpyed when ſhe wold go
Out of her houſe, to any manr place
But thus they met of aventure or of grace
And he ſalueth her with glad entent
And aſked of her whyder ſhe went.
¶ And ſhe anſwerd halfe as ſhe were madde
Unto the garden as my huſbonde badde
My trouthe for to holde, alas alas.
Aurelyus gan wonderen of this caas
And in his herte had great compaſſion
Of her chere, and of her lamentacion
And of Arueragus the worthy knyght
That bad her holde al that ſhe had hyght
So loth he was y ſhe ſhuld breke her trouth
And in his herte he caught of it great routh
Conſidring the beſt on euery ſyde
That fro his luſt yerke him better abyde
Than do ſorye a churliſſhe wretchyd deede
Yfrett fraunchiſe, & ayenſt all gentylneſſe
For which in fewe wordes ſaid he thus
Madame, ſayth to your lorde Arueragus
That ſythen I ſe this great gentilneſſe
Of him, and eke I ſe wel your diſtreſſe
That ye to me thus ſhuld hold your trouthe
Certes me thynketh it were great routhe
I haue wel leuer euer to ſuffre wo
Than depart the loue betwyxt you two
I you releſe madame into your honde
Quyte euery ſtoutement and euery bonde
That ye haue made to me, as here byfore
Sythens thilke tyme that ye were borne
My trouth I plyzt, I ſhal you neuer repreue
Of no behefte, and here I take my leue
As of the treweſt and the beſte wyfe
That euer yet I knewe in all my lyfe
But euery wight beware of her byheſte
On Dorigene remembreth at the leſte
Thus can a ſquire done a gentyll dede
As wel as can a knight, withouten drede.
¶ She thonked him vpon her knees al bare
And home vnto her huſbonde is ſhe fare
And tolde him al, as ye han herde me ſayde
And be ye ſyker, he was ſo well apayde
That it were impoſſible me to wryte
What ſhuld I lenger of this caſe endite
Arueragus, and Dorigen his wyfe
In ſouereyne blyſſe leden forth her lyfe
Neuer after was there anger hem betwene
He cheriſhed her, as though ſhe were a quene
And ſhe was to him trewe for euermore
Of theſe two folkes ye get of me nomore.
Aurelyus, that his coſt hath all forlorne
Curſeth the tyme that euer he was borne
Alas (qd he) alas that euer I behyght
Of purrd gold a thouſande pounde of weight
Unto this philoſopher, howe ſhall I do
I ſe no more, but that I am fordo
Myn heritage muſt I nedes ſell
And be a begger, here may I no leger dwell

And

And shame al my kynrede in this place
But I of him may get better grace
But natheles I wol of him assay
At certayne dayes, yere by yere to pay
And thonke him of his great curtesye
My trouth wol I kepe, I wol not lye.
With herte sore, he goth unto his cofer
And brought gold unto this philosopher
The value of fyve hundred pounde as I gesse
And him besecheth of his gentilesse
To graunt him dayes of the remenaunt
And said: maister I dare well make auaunt
I fayled neuer of my trouth as yet
For sikerly my det shal be quite
Towardes you, how that euer I fare
To gon a beggyng in my kyrtel bare
But wolde ye vouchesafe upon suerte
Two yere or thre for to respyte me
Than were I wel, for elis mote I selle
Myn heritage, there is no more to telle.
This philosopher soberly answerde
And said thus, whan he this worde herde
Have I not holde covenaunt unto the?
Yes certes, wel and truely (quod he)
Hast thou not had thy lady as the lyketh?
No no, quod he, and sorily he syketh
What was the cause, tel me if ye thou can.
Aurelyus anon his tale began
And tolde him al as ye han herd before
It nedeth not to reherce it any more.
He said Arueragus of gentylesse
Bad leuer dye in sorowe and in distresse
Than his wife were of her trouthe fals
The sorowe of Dorigene he tolde him als
How lothe she was to ben a wycked wife
And that she had leuer have lost her lyfe
And yet her trouth she swore through innocence
She nowe erste herde speke of apparence
That made me have of her so great pite
And right as freely as he sent her to me
As freely sent I her to him agayne
This is al and some, there nys no more to sayn.
The Philosopher answerde, leue brother
Everiche of you did gentrily to other
Thou art a squier, and he is a knyght
But god forbyd, for his blisful myght
But if a clerke could done a gentyl dede
As wel as any of you, it is no drede
Sir I relese the thy thousande pounde
As now thou were crope out of the grounde
Ne neuer er now haddest thou knowen me
For sir, I wol not taken a peny of the
For all my craft, ne nought for my trauayle
Thou hast ypayed right wel for my bitayle
It is ynough, and farwel and have good day
And toke his horse, and rode forth on his way.
Lordinges this question wold I aske now
Whiche was the moste fre, as thynketh you
Now telleth me, er that I further wende
I can no more, my tale is at an ende.

Here endeth the Frankeleyns tale, and begynneth the seconde Nonnes prologue.

The ministre and the norice unto vyces
Which that men clepen in englishe idelnesse
That is porter of the gate of delyces
To eschue, and by her contrary her oppresse
That is to sayne, by lefful besynesse
Wel ought we to don our entent
Lest that the fende throughe idelnesse vs hent

For he that with his thousande cordes slye
Continually vs wayteth to be slappe
Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye
He can so lightly catche him in his trappe
Til that a man be hente, right by the lappe
He nys not ware the fende hath him in honde
Wel ought vs werche, and ydelnesse withstonde

And though men dredden neuer for to dye
Yet se men wel by reson douteles
That ydelnesse is rote of slogardye
Of which ther cometh neuer no good encres
And slothnes the slouth holdeth hem in a les
Only to slepe, and for to eate and drinke
And to deuouren al that other swynke

And for to put vs from suche ydelnesse
That cause is of so great confusyon
I have here done my faythful besynesse
After the legende in translacion
Right of thy glorious lyfe and passion
Thou with thy garlond, wrought with rose and lely
The mene I, mayde and martir seynt Cecely

And thou that art flour of virgins all
Of whom that Bernarde lyst so wel to write
To the at my begynnyng first I call
Thou comfort of vs wretches, do me endyte
Thy maidēs deth, that wan thorow her merite
The eternal lyfe, and of the fende victorie

As men may after rede in her storie.

Thou mayde & mother, doughter of thy sonne
Thou well of mercy, synful soules cure
In whō that god of bounte chese for to wōne
Thou humble and hye ouer euery creature
Thou nobiest, so farre ouer nature
That no disdayne the maker had of hynde
His sōne in blode & flesshe to clothe & wynde.

Whiche in the cloyster of thy blysful sydis
Toke mans shappe, the eterne loue & pees
That of the true compas, lorde and gyde is
Whom heuen, erthe, and see, withouten les
Aye heryen, and thou virgyne wemles
Bare of thy body, & dwellest mayden pure
The creatour of euery creature.

Assembled is in the magnificence
With mercy, goodnesse, and with suche pyte
That thou art the sonne of excellence
Not onely that helpest hem that prayen the
But often tyme of thy benignyte
Ful freely, or that men thyn helpe beseche
Thou goost before, and art her lyues leche

Now helpe ꝑ blysfull, & meke fayre mayde
We flemed wrecche, in this deserte of gall
Thinke on ꝑ woman of Canane, that sayde
That whelpes eate some of ꝑ crōmes small
That from her lordes table ben yfall
And though ꝑ I vnworthy doughter of Eue
Be synful, yet accepteth my beleue.

And for that faith is dede withouten werkis
So for to werche, yeue me wytte and space
That I be quit from ꝑ place ꝑ most derk is
O thou that art so fayre and ful of grace
Be myn aduocate in that hye place
There as without ende is song Osanna
Thou Christes mother, & doughter of Anna

And of thy lyght, my soule in prison lyght
That troubled is by the contagyon
Of my body, and also by the wight
Of erthly lust, and also false affection
O hauen, O refute, O saluacion
Of hem that ben in sorowe and distresse
Now helpe, for to my werke I wol me dresse

Yet I pray you that reden that I write
Forgyueth me, that I do no dylygence
This storie subtelly to endyte
For two haue I the wordes & the sentence
Of him that at the saintes reuerence
The storie wrote, and folowen her legende
And pray you that ye wol my werke amende

First wol I you the name of seynt Cecile
Expowne, as men may in her storie se
It is to say in Englysshe, heuens lylly
For pure chastnes of virginite
Or for the whytnesse had of honeste
And grene of conscience, and of good fame
The sote fauour lylly was her name

Or Cecily is to say, the way to blynde
For the ensample was by good teching
Or eke Cecily, as I writen fynde
Is ioyned by a maner conioyning
Of heuen and Lya, in her figuring
The heuen is set for thought of holynesse
And Lya, for her labyngbesynesse

Cecily may she be said in this maniere
Wanting of blyndnesse, for her great lyght
Of sapience, and for her thewes clere
Or eke Leo, this maydens name bryght
Of heuen & Leos cometh, of which by ryght
Men might the heuen of people her call
Ensample of good and wise werkes all

For Leos people, in Englysshe is to say
And right as men may in the heuen se
The sunne, and moone, & sterres euerye way
Right so men gostly, in this mayden se
Haven of fairy, the great magnanymite
And eke the clerenesse hole of sapience
And fondrie werkes, bright of excellence

And right so as these philosophers write
That heuen is swift, rounde, & eke brennyng
Right so was fayre Cicily the white
Full swifte and besy in euery good worchyng
And rounde and hole in good perseuerryng
And brennyng euer in charite ful bright
Now haue I declared you what she hight.

Here endeth the seconde nonnes prologue, and begynneth her tale

THis maiden bryght Cecile, as her life sayth
Was come of Romains and of noble kynde
And so forth fostred vp in the faith
Of Christ, and bare hys gospel in her mynde
She neuer ceassed, as I wytten fynde
Of her prayer, and god to loue and drede
Besechyng him to kepe her maydenhede

And whā this mayde should vnto a man
Ywedded be, that was ful yong of age
Whiche that ycleped was Valeryan
And day was come of her maryage
She ful deuout and humble in her corage
Under her robe of gold, that sat ful fayre
Had next her flesshe yclad her in an heyre

And whiles that the organs made melodye
To god alone thus in herte songe she
O lorde, my soule and eke my body gye
Vnwemmed, lest I confounded be
And for his loue that dyed vpon a tre
Euery seconde or thirde day she faste
Ye byddyng in her orisons full faste.

The night cam, and to bed must she gone
With her husbonde, as often is the manere
And priuely she sayd vnto him anon
O swete and wel yloued spouse dere
There is a counsayle, and ye wol it here
Which that right fayne I wold to you fayne
So that ye me ensure, it not to bewrayne.

Valeryan gan fast vnto her swere
That for no cas, ne thyng that might be
He shulde neuer to none bewrayen here
And than at erst, thus to him sayd she
I haue an angel, whiche that loueth me
That wt gret loue, where so I wake or slepe
Is redy aye, my body for to kepe

And if that he may feelen out of drede
That ye me touche or loue in vylonye
He right anon wyl slee you with the dede
And in your youth thus shal ye dye
And if that ye in clene loue me gye
He wol you loue as me, for your clennesse
And shewe you of his ioye and brightnesse.

This Valerian, corrected as god wolde
Answerd ayen, if I shal trust the
Let me that aungell se, and him beholde
And if that it a very aungel be
Than wol I done as thou hast prayd me
And if thou loue another man forsothe
Right wt this sword thā wol I sle you bothe

Cecyle answerd anon in this wyse
If that ye lust, that angel shul ye se
So that ye trowe on Christ, and you baptyse
Goth forth to Via apia (qd she)
That fro this town ne stante but myles thre
And to the pore folke that there dwell
Say hem right thus, as I shal you tell.

Tel hem that I Cecyle, you to hem sende
To shewen you the good Vrban the olde
For secret nedes, and for good entent
And whan that ye saynt Vrban han beholde
Tel him the wordes, that I to you tolde
And whan that he hath purged you fro sinne
Than shall ye se that angel er ye twynne.

Valeryan is to that place ygon
And right as him was taught by his lerning
He founde this holy Vrban anon
Among these saynctes burials loutyng
And he anon, without taryeng
Dyd his message, and whan he had it tolde
Vrban for ioy, gan his hondes vp holde.

The teres from his eyen let he fall
Almighty god, O Jesu Christ (qd he)
Sower of chaste counsayle, hierde of vs all
The frute of thilke sede of chastyte
That thou hast sowe in Cecile, take to the
Lo lyke a besy bee, withouten gyle
The serueth aye thyn owne thrall Cecile

For thilke spouse, that she toke but newe
Ful like a fierce lyon, she sendeth here
As meke as any lambe was to ewe
And with that word, anon there gan apere
An olde man, clad in white clothes clere
That had a boke with letters of gold in hōd
And gan byfore Valeryan for to stond.

Valeryan as deed fel downe for drede
Whan he this olde man saw standyng so
Whiche forthwith anon he herde him rede
O lord, O fayth, O god withouten mo
Of Christendome, and father of al also
Abouen al, and ouer al euery where

These wordes al with gold wryten were.

Whan this was rad, thā sayd this olde man
Lernest thou this thing or none, say ye or nay
I leue al this thing (qd Valeryan)
Vnder the heuen no wight ne thinke may
Nother thyng than this, I dare well say
Tho vanyshed the olde man, he nyst where
And pope Vrban him chrystened right there.

Valerian goth home, & fyndeth Cecilye
Within his chambre, w an aungel stonde
This aungel had of rose and of lylye
Crownes two, the whiche he bare in honde
And first to Cecyle, as I vnderstonde
He yaue that one, and after gan he take
That other to Valeryan her make.

With body clene, & wt vnwemmed thought
Kepeth aye wel these crownes (qd he)
From paradyse to you I haue hem brought
Ne neuer more shullen they rotten be
Ne leese her swete sauour, trusteth me
Ne neuer wight shal sene hem with eye
But he be chast, and hate vilonye

And thou Valeryan, for thou so sone
Assenteddest to good counsayle also
Say what þ lyst, and þ shalt haue thy bone
I haue a brother (qd Valeryen tho)
That in this world I loue no man so
I pray you that my brother may haue grace
To knowe the trouth, as I do in this place.

The angel answerd, god liketh your request
And both with the palme of martirdome
Shal ye come vnto the blysful fest
And wt þ worde Tyburce his brother come
And whan that he the sauour vndernome
Which that the roses and the lylyes caste
Within his hert he gan to wonder faste.

And sayd: I wonder this tyme of the yere
Whence that this sote sauour cometh so
Of roses and lylies, that I smell here
For though I had hem in myn hondes two
The sauour myght in me no deper go
The swete smel, that in myn hert I fynde
Hath chaunged me al in another kynde.

Valeryan sayd, two crownes haue we
Snowe white & rose reed, that shyneth clere
Which that syn eyen han no might to se
And as thou smellest hem through my praiere
So shalt thou sen hem my leue brother dere
If it so be that thou wilte without flonyte
Bylene a right, and knowe the verye trouthe.

Tyburce answerd, sayest thou this to me
In sothnesse, or in dyrne derken I this
In dremes (qd Valeryan) han we be
Vnto this tyme, brother myn I wys
But now at erst, our dwellyng in trouth is
How wast thou (qd Tiburce) & in what wise
Quod Valeryan, that I shal the deuyse.

The angel of god hath me þ trouth taught
Which thou shalt sen, & thou wylt leuey
The ydols, and be clene, and eis naught
And of the myracles of these crownes twey
Seynt Ambrose in his preface iuste to sey
Solempnely this noble doctour dere
Cómendeth it, and saith in this manere.

The palme of martirdom for to receyue
Seyn Cecyle, fulfylled of gods yrete
Thy world & eke her chambre gan she weine
Witnesse Tyburce, and Cecyles hyrne
To which god of his bounte wolde hyrne
Crownes two, of floures wel smellyng
And made the angel hem tho crownes bring

The maid hath brought hem to blysse adoun
The world hath wist what it is worth certain
Deuocion and chastite wel for to loue
Tho shewed him Cecile al open and playne
That al ydoles ben but thynges in vayne
For they ben dombe, & therto they ben defe
And charged him his ydoles for to lefe.

Who that troweth not this, a beest he is
(Qd this Tyburce) if that I shal not lye
She kyssed his brest whan she herde this
And was ful glad he couthe trouth espye
This day take I the for myn allye
Sayd this blysful mayden fayre and dere
For after that she sayd as ye may here.

Lo right so as the loue of Christ (qd she)
Made me thy brothers wyfe, right in þ wise
Anon for myn alye here take I the
Sythens that thou wolt chine ydols dilyse
Go with thy brother now, & the baptise
And make the clene, so þ thou mayst beholde
The angels face, of which thy brother tolde

Tyburce

Tiburce answerde, and sayd: brother dere
first tell me whether I shal, & to wh at man
To whom he sayd, come forth wh good chere
I wol the lede vnto the pope Urban
To Urban brother myn Valeryan
(Qd this Tiburce) wilt thou me thider lede
Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede

¶ Ne menest thou not Urban (qd he tho)
That is so ofte dampned to be deed
And wonneth in halkes to and fro
And dare not ones put forth his heed
Men shulde him brenne in a fyre so reed
If he were founde, and men might him spye
And we also, that bere him companye

¶ And while we seken thylke diuinite
That is yhidde in heuen priuely
Algate ybrent in this worlde shuld we be
To whom Cecile answerde boldely
Men might dede well and skylfully
This lyfe to lese, myn owne dere brother
If this were lyuing onely and non other.

¶ But there is better liuyng in other place
That neuer shalbe loste, ne dede the nought
which goddes sonne vs told through his grace
That fathers sonne hath al thing wrought
And al ꝑ wrought is with a skilful thought
The gost that from the father gan procede
hath souled hym without any drede.

¶ By word and by miracle, the goddes sonne
When he was in this worlde, declared here
That there is other life there men may wõne
To whom answerd Tiburce: O suster dere
Ne saydest thou right nowe in this maniere
There nas but one god lorde in sothfastnesse
And nowe of thre howe may ꝑ bere witnesse.

¶ That shal I tel (qd she) or that I go
Right as a man hath sapyences thre
Memoyre, engyne, and intellecte also
So in suche beyng of diuinite
Thre persons may there right wel be
Tho gan the there ful besily him preche
Of Christes sonne, and of his paynes teche

¶ And many poyntes of his passion
how gods sonne in this world was wholde
To do mankynde playne remyssyon
That was bounde in synnes & cares colde
Al these thinges she vnto Tiburce tolde
And after this Tiburce in good entent
With Valerian to pope Urban went.

That thonked god, & with glad hert & light
He christened him, & made him in that place
Perfyte in hys lernyng goddes knight
And after this Tiburce gate suche grace
That euery day he sawe in tyme and space
The aungel of god, and euery maner boone
That he god asked, it was sped full soone

¶ It were full harde by order for to sayne
How many wonders Jesu for him wrought
But at the laste, to tell shorte and playne
The sergeaũt of the town hem sought
And hem bifore Almache ꝑ prouost brought
Which hem aposed, & knewe al her entent
And to the ymage of Jupiter hem sent.

¶ And sayd, who so wol do no sacrifyce
Swappe of his heed, this is my sentẽce here
Anon these martyrs, that I you deuyse
One Maximus that was an officere
Of the prefectes, and his counceliere
Hem hent, & whan he forth the saynte lad
Him self he wepte for pite that he had

Whan Maximus had herd this saintes lore
He gate hem of the turmentours leue
And had hem to his house withouten more
And with her preching, er that it were eue
They gon from the turmentour reue
And fro Maximus, & from his folke echone
The false fayth, to trowen in god alone.

¶ Cecily came, whan it was worn nyght
With prestes, that him christened al in fere
And afterward, whan day was worn light
Cecile hem sayd with a sober chere
Now Christes own knightes leue & dere
Casteth al away the werkes of derkenesse
And armeth you in armoure of brightnesse

Ye han forsoth ydone a great batalle (serued
your cours is don, your fayth hathe you con-
Gothe to the crowne of lyfe ꝑ maye not fayle
The rightful iuge, whiche ye han serued
Shal yene it you as ye it deserued
And whan this thing was sayd, as I deuyse
Men lad hem forth to done the sacrifice

But whã they were vnto the place ibrought
To tell shortly the conclusioun

They nolde entence ne sacrifice right nought
But on her knees, they sate hem adoun
With humble herte and sadde deuocion
And soffren bothe her herdes in the place
Her soules went to the kyng of grace.

This Maximus that sawe the thing betyde
With pitouse teares tolde it anon ryght
That he her soules sawe to heuen glyde
With aungels full of clerenesse and of lyght
And with his word conuerted many a wyght
For whiche Almachius dyd him so to bete
With whippes of lede, til he his life gan lete

Cecile hym toke, and buryed hym anon
By Tiburce and Valeryan sothly
Within her buryeng place vnder a stone
And after this Almachius hastely
Bad his ministers fetchen openly
Cecily, so that she might in his presence
Do sacrifice, and Jupiter encence

But they conuerted at her wyse loze
Accepten full soze, and yaue full credence
Vnto her worde, and cryden moze and moze
Christe goddes sonne, without difference
Is very god, this is all our sentence
That hath a seruaunt so good hym to serue
Thus wyde woyce we trow though we sterue

Almachius, that herde all thys doyng
Bad fetche Cecile, that he myght her se
And alderfirst this was his askyng
What maner woman arte thou (qd he)
I am a gentyll woman borne (quod she)
I aske of the (quod he) though it the greue
Of thy religion and of thy beleue

Ye haue begon your question folishly
(Qd she) that wolde two answers conclude
In one demaunde, ye asken leudly
Almachius answerde to that similitude
Of whence cometh thyn answere so rude
Of whence (qd she) when ỳ she was frayned
Of conscience, and of good fayth vnfayned.

Almachius sayd, ne takest thou none hede
Of my power? and she him answerde this
Your might (qd she) full litell is to drede
For euery mortall mannes power mys
But ryght a bladder full of wynde ywys
For with a nedles poynt, when it is yblowe
May al the bolle of it be layde full lowe.

Ful wrongfully beganne thou (qd he)
And yet in wronge is thy perseueraunce
Wote thou not how our myghty princes fre
Haue thus cõmaũded & made ordinaunce
That euery christen wight shal haue penaũce
But if that he his christendome withsey
And gon al quite, if he wol it reney.

Your princes erren, as your nobles dothe
Quod tho Cecily, in a wode sentence
Ye make vs gylty, and it is not sothe
For ye that knowen wel our innocence
For as muche as we done a reuerence
To Christe, and for we bere a christen name
Ye put on vs a cryme and eke a blame.

But we that knowen thylke name so
For vertuous, we may it not withsey.
Almachius answerd, chese one of these two
Do sacrifice, or christendome reney
That thou mowe scapen by that wey
At whiche worde the holy blysful mayde
Gan for to laughe, & to the iudge she sayde

O iudge confused in thy nycete
Wolt thou that I reney innocence
To make me a wycked wight (qd she)
Lo he dissymuleth here in audyence
He stareth and wodeth in his aduertence
To whom Almachius sayd: O fely wrecche
Thou wost not howe farre my myght may (stretche

Hath not our myght princes yeuen
To me, bothe power and eke auctorite
To make folke to dyen or to lyuen
Why spekest thou so proudly than to me
I ne speke it not but stedfastly (qd she)
Not proudely, for I say as for my syde
I hate deedly thylke vyce of pryde.

And yf thou dyede not a sothe for to here
Than wol I shewen all openly by ryght
That thou hast made a full great lesing here
Thou sayst thy princes han yeuen the might
Bothe to slee and eke to quicke a wight
Thou ne mayst but onely lyue byreue
Thou hast nor other power ne leue.

But thou mayst say, thy prices han ỳ maked
Minister of derthe, for yf thou speke of me
Thou lyest, for thy power is full naked
Do way thy boldnesse, sayde Almachius tho
And do sacrifice to our goddesses or thou go

I reke not what wronge thou me profer
For I can not suffre, as can a philosopher

But thilke wronges may I not endure
That thou speken of our gods here (qd he)
Cecile answerd, O nyce creature
thou saidst no worde sithes þ spakest to me
That I ne knewe therwith thy nicite
And that thou were in euery maner wise
Rude officer, and a vayne iustice.

The lacketh nothyng to thyne bitter eyen
That þ nart blynd, for thing þ we seen all
That is a stone, that men wel may aspyen
That like stone, a god thou wolt it call
I rede the let thyn honde vpon it fall
And taste it wel, þ stone thou shalte it fynde
Hens that þ seest not wt thin eyen blynde

It is a shame that the people shall
Go frome the, and laugh at thy folye
For comenly men wot it well ouer all
That mighty god is in his heuens hye
And these ymages, wel mayste thou aspye
To be ne to hem selfe may they not profyte
For in her effecte, they be not worth a myte

Thus and suche other wordes sayd she
And he wex wroth, and bad she should be lede
Home to her house, and in her house (qd he)
Brenne her in a bathe, with flames rede
And as he bad, right so was done the dede
For in a bathe they gan her fast shetten
And night þ day great fyre vnder they betten.

All the long nyght, and eke the day also
For al the fire, and eke the bathes hete
She sat al colde, and felt of it no wo
It made her not a droppe for to swete
But in that bath her lyfe she more lete
For Almachie, with a ful wicked entent
To stern her in the bathe, his sonde sent

Thre strokes in the necke he smote her tho
The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce
He might not smyte al her necke a two
And for there was that tyme an ordynaunce
That no mã shuld do no person such penaũce
The fourth stroke to smyte, soft or sore
This tormentour durst smyte no more.

But half deed, wt her necke yrouē there
He left her lye, and on his way he went
The christen folke that aboute her were
With sheetes home ful fayre her hente
Thre dayes lyued she in this turmente
And neuer ceased she the fayth to teache
That she had frosted hem, she gan to preche

And hem she gaue her mouables & her thyng
And to the pope Urban betoke hem tho
And sayd, I asked this of the heuen kyng
To haue respite thre dayes and no mo
To recõmaunde to you et that I go
These soules, and that I might so werche
Here of myn house perpetuellyche a cherche.

Sayne Urban, with hys dekens priuely
The body fette, and buried it by night
Amonge his other sayntes honestly
Her house the churche of saint Cecile hight
Sayne Urban halowed it, as he wel might
In whiche vnto this day, in noble wyse
Men don to Chriſt & to his sayntes seruyse.

Here endeth the seconde nonnes tale.
and here begynneth the prologue
of the chanons yoman.

Whan ended was the lyfe of
sayncte Cecile
Er we fully had rydden fyue
myle
At Boughtõ vnder the bleo,
vs gan a take
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake
And vnder that he had a whyte surplise
His hakney, that was all pomely grise
So swette, that it wonder was to se
It semed that he had pricked myles thre
The horse eke that his yoman rode vpon
So swette, that vneth might he gon
About the paytrell stode the some ful hye
He was of some as flecked as a pye
A male twyfolde on hys croper lay
It semed that he caryed lytell aray
All light for somer rode thys worthy man
And in my herte wondren I began
What that he was, tyll I vnderstode
Howe that his cloke was sewed to his hode
For whiche, when I had longe auised me
I demed him some chanon for to be
His hatte hinge at hys backe by a lace
For he had ridden more then trot or pace
He rode aye pryckyng as he were wode

I clote

A clote lefe he had layde vnder his hode
For swerte, and for to kepe his heed fro here
But it was lope for to se him swete
His forehed dropped, as a stillatorye
Were full of plantayne or of pellytorye
And when he was come, he gan crye
God saue (qd̄ he) thys ioly companye
Fast haue I pricked (qd̄ he) for your sake
Because that I wolde you ouertake
To rydden in thys mery companye
Thys yoman was eke ful of curtesye
And sayd sers, nowe in the morowe tyde
Out of your hostrye I sawe you ryde
And warned here my lorde and souerayne
Whiche that to rydden with you is ful fayne
For his disport, he loueth dalyaunce.
Fred for thy warnig god yeue ꝑ good chãce
Then sayd our host, certayne it wolde seme
Thy lorde were wise, & so I may wel deme
He is ful ioconde also dare I laye
Can he ought tell a mery tale or twaye
With whiche he glade may thys companye.
Who sir my lorde? Ye without lye
He can of mirthe and eke of iolyte
Not but ynough also sir trusteth me
And ye him knewe also wel as do I
Ye wonlde wonder howe well and thriftely
He couthe werke, and that in sondrye wise
He hath taken on hym many a great empryse
Whiche were ful harde, for any that is here
To bringe aboute, but they of hym it lere
As homely as he rydeth amouge you
If ye him knew, it wold ben for your prowe
Ye wolde not forgon hys aquayntaunce
For mochell good I dare laye in balaunce
All that I haue in my possessyon
He is a man of hye discressyon
I warne you well he is a passyng wyse man.
Wel (qd̄ our hoste) I praye the tel me than
Is he a clerke or non? tell what he is.
A clerke, nay he is greter thẽ a clerke ywis
Sayd the yoman, and in wordes fewe
Hoste of his crafte somwhat wol I shewe
I say my lorde can suche a subtelte
But all his craft ye may not wete of me
And somewhat helpe I yet to his werchyng
That all the grounde that we be on rydyng
Tyl we come to Canterbury towne
He coulde all clene turne vp and downe
And paue it al of syluer and of golde.
And whan this yoman had thus ytolde
Vnto our hoste: he sayde benedicite
This thing is wonder meruaylous to me
Seeng that thy lorde is of so hye prudence
(Because of which, men shuld him reuerence)
That of his worshyp recketh he so lyte
His ouerest koppe is not worth a myte
As in effecte to hym, so mote I go
It is al baudy and to tore also
Why is thy lorde so slothfulyche I the pray
And is of power better clothes to bey
If that his dede acorde with thy speche
Tel me that, and that I the beseche.
Why (qd̄ this yeman) wherto askest me
God helpe me so, for he shal neuer the
But I wol not auowe that I saye
And therfore kepe it secret I you praye
He is to wise in fay, as I beleue
That is ouerdone nyl not preue
And right as clerkes sayne, it is a byrde
Wherfore I holde him in that, leude & nyce
For whan a man hath ouer great a wit
Ful ofte it happeth him to misusen it
So doth my lorde, and that me greueth sore
God amende it, I can say you no more.
Therof no force good yeman (qd̄ our host)
Seeng of the conuyng of thy lorde thou wost
Tel howe he dothe, I pray the herteily
Seeng that he is so crafty and so sly
Wher dwellen ye, if it to tell be
In the subbarbes of a towne (qd̄ he)
Lurkyng in hernes and in lanes blynde
Where theie robers, and theues by kynde
Holden her priuy fearful residence
As they that dare not shewen her presence
So fare we, if that I shall say the soth.
Yet (qd̄ our host) let me talke tothe
Why art thou so discolourd in thy face
Peter (qd̄ he) god yeue it harde grace
I am so vsed in the hote fyre to blowe
That it hath chaũged my colour as I trowe
I am not wont in no myrrour to prie
But swynke sore, and lerne to multiplye
We blondren euer, and poderen in the fyre
And for al that, we faylen of our desyre
For euer we lacken our conclusyon
To mucb folke we do illusion
And borowe gold, be it a pounde or two
Or ten or twelue, or many sũmes mo
And make hem wene at the lest way
That of a pounde we coulde make tway
Yet is it false, and aye han we good hope
It for to done, and after it we grope
But that science is so ferre vs byfore
We mowe not, al though we had it swore
It ouertake, it flyt away so faste

It woll vs make beggers at the laste.
whiles this yeman was thus in his talkyng
This chanon drewe him nere, & herd al thyng
Which this yeman spake, for suspection
Of mennes speche euer had thys chanon
For Caton sayeth, he that gylty is
Deuyneth all thing be spoken of hym ywis
Bycause of that, he gan so nyghe to drawe
To his yeman, to herken al his sawe
And thus he sayd vnto hys yeman tho
Holde now thy peace, & speke no wordes mo
For if thou do, thou shalte it sore abye
Thou slaundrest me here in this companye
And eke discouerest that thou shuldest hyde.
Ye (qō our host) tel on what so euer betyde
Of al this threting, recke the not a myte.
In fayth (qō he) no more do I but lyte
And whan this chanon saw it wolde not be
But hys yeman wonlde tel his priuite
He fledde away for very sorowe and shame.
A (qō the yeman) here shall rise a game
All that I can, anon wol I you tell
Sens he is gon, the fonle fende hym quell
For neuer here after, woll I with him mete
For penye ne for pounde, I you behete
He that me brought firste vnto that game
Er that he dye, sorowe haue he and shame
For it is erneſt to me by my faythe
That fele I well, what so any man sayethe
And yet for all my smert and al my greue
For all my sorowe, labour and mischefe
I couthe neuer leaue it in no wyse
Nowe wolde god my witte myght suffyce
To tellen all that longeth to that arte
But natheleſſe, yet woll I tel you a parte
Sens that my lord is gon, I woll not spare
Suche thing as I knowe I wol declare.

Here endeth the prologue of the chanons yeman, and here foloweth hys tale.

With this Chanon I dwelt seuen yere
And of his science I am neuer the nere
All that I had, I haue loste therby
And god wotte, so hath many mo than I
Here I was wonte to be right freshe & gay
Of clothyng, and eke of other good aray
Nowe may I weare an hese vpon myn heed
And wher my colour was both freshe & reed
Nowe it is wanne, and of a leeden hewe
Whoso it vseth, sore shall hym rewe
And of my swynke, yet bleered is myn eye
Lo whiche auauntage it is to multyplye
That sliding science, hath me made so bare
That I haue no good, where that euer I fare
And yet I am endetted so therby
Of golde, that I haue borowed trewely
That whyle I lyue, I shall it quite neuer
Let euery man beware by me euer
What maner man that casteth hym therto
If he contynue, I holde hys thryfte ydo
So helpe me god, therby shall he neuer wyn
But empte his purse, & make his wittes thin
And when he, thorow his madnesse & foly
Hath loste his owne good, through ieopardy
Than he exciteth other men therto
To lese her good, as hym selfe hath do
For vnto shrewes, ioye it is and ese
To haue her felawes in payne and disese
For thus was I ones lerned of a clerke
Of ỹ no charge, I wol speke of our werke
When we be there, as we shall exercise
Our cluisshe crafte, we semen wonder wise
Our termes ben so clergiall and so quaynte
I blowe the fyre, tyll myn herte faynte.
What shold I tel eche proporcyon
Of thynges, whiche we werchen vpon,
As ou fyue or fyre vnces, may well be
Of syluer, or of some other quantyte
And before me to tellen you the names
Of orpyment, brent bones, pron squames
That into pouder grounden ben full small
And in an erthen potte, howe put is all
And salte yput in, and also papere
Byfore these pouders that I spoke of here
And well yconered, with a lampe of glas
And of muche other thing that there was
And of the pottes and glas englutyng
That of the ayre myght passe out nothyng
And of the esy fyre and smerte also
Which that was made, and of the care & wo
That we had in our matters sublimyng
And in amalgaming, and calsenyng
Of quicksyluer, clepyd Mercury crude
For all our sleyght, we canne not conclude
Our orpyment, and sublymed Mercurye
Our grounde lytarge eke on porphirye
Of eche of these, vnces a certayne
Not helpeth vs, our labour is in vayne
Ne eke our spirites assencyon
Ne yet our matters, that lyen all fyre adoun

Nowe

Wolde in our werkyng nothyng muarle
For lotte is all our labourē & our trauayle
And al the coste, & twenty deuyll way
Is lotte also, whyche we vpon it lay.
¶ There is also full many a nother thyng
That is to our crafte apertaynyng
Though I by order hem ne reherse can
Because that I am a leude man
Yet wol I tellen hem, as they come to minde
Thoughe I ne can sette hem in her kinde
As bole armoniake, verdegrece, boras
And sondrye vessels made of erth and glas
Our vrinals, and our diestensoryes
Viols, crosselets, and sublimatories
Cucurbytes, and alembekes eke
And other suche, dere ynough a leke
It nedeth not to reherse hem all
Waters rubyfying, and boles gall
Arsnike, sal armoniake, and brimstone
And herbes coulde I tell eke many one
As Egrimonye, valeryan, and lunarye
And other suche, yt that me lyst to tarye
Our lampes brennyng bothe night and day
To bringen about our craste, if that we may
Our fountayne eke of calcinacion
And of waters albificacion
Unslecked lyme, chalke, and glayre of an eye
Powders diuers, asshes, dong, pysse, & eyre
Herd pokettes, salt peter, and vitriole
And diuers fyres, made of wode and cole
Sal tartre, alcaly, and sal preparate
And combust matters, and coagulate
Clay made vp horse duge, mans heere, & oyle
Of tartre alym, glas, berme, wort, & argoile
Resagor, and other maters enbibyng
And eke of our maters encorporyng
And of our siluer citrinacion
Our fermentyng, and eke fermentacion
Our Ingottes testes, and many mo
I wol you tell as was me taught also
The foure spirites, and the bodyes seuen
By order, as ofte I herde my lorde nemene.
The first spirite quicke siluer cleped is
The seconde orpyment, the thirde ysois
Sal armoniake, the fourthe brimstone
¶ The bodyes seuen eke, lo here hem anone
Sol golde is, and Luna syluer we threpe
Mars yrō, Mercury quicke siluer we clepe
Saturnus leede, and Jupitur is tynne
And Venus coper, by my father kynne.
¶ This cursed crafte, who so wol exercise
He shal no good haue that maye hym suffice
For all the good he spendeth ther aboute
He lest shall, therof haue I no doute
Who so that lysten to lere hys lore
Let hym come forth and lerne to multeplye
And euery man, that hath ought in hys coffer
Let him apere, and wexe a philosofer
Ffor euery dele this craste is so lyght for to lere
Nay nay god wote, al be he monke or frere
Preest or chanon, or any other wight
Though he syt at his boke both day & night
In lerning of this craste fyue yere or twayne
It is in vayne, and parde muche more
Is to lere a leude man thys subtelte
Fye speke not therof, it wol not be
Al coulde he lerne, or coulde he none
As in effecte, he shall fynde it all one
For bothe two, by my saluacion
Concluden in multyplicacion
Ylyche wel, when they haue all ydo
This is to sayne, they faylen bothe two.
¶ Yet forgate I nuche erst to sayle
Of waters corosyfe, and of tynayle
And of bodyes mollificacion
And also of her induracion
Oyles, ablutions, metall fusible
To tellen you all, wolde passe any bible
That o where is, wherfore as for the beste
Of al these names nowe wol I reste
For as I trowe, I haue you tolde ynowe
To reyse a fende, al loke he neuer so rowe.
¶ Nay lef be the philosophers stone
Elixer cleped, we seken faste echone
For had we hym, than were we syker ynowe
But vnto god of heuen I make auowe
For al our crafte, when that we han al ydo
And all our sleyghe, he will not come vs to
He hath made vs spende muche goode
For sorow of which, almost we waxen wode
But that good hope crepeth in our herte
Supposyng euer, though we sore smerte
To ben relieued of hym afterwarde
Supposyng and hope is sharpe and harde
I warne you well it is to lyken euer
That nature temps hath made men diuerse
Intrust therof, all that euer they had
Yet of that arte, they couldē not wexe sad
For vnto him it is a bytter swete
So semeth it, for ne had they but a shete
Which they might wrappen hem in a night
And a brattē to walken in a day light
They woldē hem sel, & spēde it on this craste
They come not flynte, tyl nothyng be laste
And euer more, where that euer they gone
Men may hem ken by smell of brimstone

For

for al the worlde they stynken as a bote
her sauour is so rammysshe and so hote
That though a man a myle from hem be
The sauour wol enfecte him trusteth me
Lo thus by smellyng, & by threde dare aray
That men lyst, this folke knowe they may
And if a man wol aske him prively
Why they be clothed so vnthriftely
Right anon they wol rowne in his ere
And sayne, if that they aspyed were
Men wol hem slee, bycause of her science
Lo thus these folke bytrayen innocence
But passe ouer this, I go my tale vnto.
¶ Er that the potte be on the fyre ydo
Of metalles, with a certayne quantite
My lorde hem tempereth, & no man but he
Now he is gon, I dare say boldely
For as men sayne, he can done craftely
Algate I wot wel he hath suche a name
And yet ful ofte he renneth in the blame
And wot ye how, ful ofte it happeth so
The pot tobrsteth, and farwel al is go
These metalles ben of so great violence
Our walles may not make hem resistence
But yf they were wrought of lyme and stone
They percen so, & through the wal they gone
And some of hem synken in to the grounde
Thus haue we loste by tymes many a pounde
And some are scattered al the floore aboute
Some lepen into the rofe without doute
Thus the fende not in our syght him shewe
I trowe that he with vs be, that like shrewe
Isabel where that he is lorde and syre
Be is there no more wo, ne angre ne yre
Whan that our pot is broke, as I haue saide
Euery man chite, & holte him yuel apayde
Some said it was long of the fyre makynge
Some said nay, it was on the blowynge
Than was I ferde, for that was myn office
¶ Straw (qd the thirde) ye ben leude & nyce
It was not tempred as it ought to be.
¶ Nay (qd the fourth) stynte & herken me
Bycause our fyre was not made of beche
That is the cause, and none other so theche
I can not tell wherein it is alonge
But wel I wot great strife is vs amonge.
What (qd my lord) ther nys no more to done
Of these perylles I wol beware efte sone
I am right siker, that the potte was crased
Be as be may, be ye not amased
As shape is, let swepe the floore as swythe
Plucke vp your hert, & be glad and blythe.
The mullocke on an heape yswepte was
And on the floore cast a canuas
And al this mulloke in a syue ythrowe
And systed and yplucked many a throwe.
¶ Parde (qd one) somwhat of our metall
Yet is there here, thoughe we haue not all
And tho this thing mishapped hath as nowe
Another tyme it may ben wel ynowe
We mote put our good in auenture
A marchaunt parde, may not aye endure
Trusteth me well in his prosperyte
Somtyme his good is drowned in the see
And somtyme it cometh safe vnto the londe
Peace (qd my lord) ỳ next tyme I woll fonde
To bring our craft al in an other plyte
And but I do syns, let me haue the wyte
There was defaute in somwhat wel I wote
¶ Another sayd, the fyre was ouer hote
But be it hote or colde, I dare say thys
That we concluden euer more a mys
We faylen of that whiche we wold haue
And in our madnesse euer more we raue
And whan we be togyther euerychon
Euery man semeth as wyse as Salomon
But al thyng, which that shyneth as ỳ golde
Is not golde, as I haue herde tolde
Ne euery appell that is fayre at eye
Nys not good, what so men clappe or crye
¶ Right so it fareth among vs
He that semeth the wysest by Jesus
Is most fole, whan it cometh to the preue
And he that semeth trewest is a theue
That shal ye know, er ỳ I from you wende
By that I of my tale haue made an ende.
¶ There was a chanon of reli gyoun
Amonges vs, would enfecte al a toun
Though it as great were as Nynyue
Rome, Alysaundre, Troye, and other thre
His sleyght and his infynyte falsnesse
There couthe no man wryten as I gesse
Though that he myght lyue a thousand yere
In al this worlde of falsenesse nys his pere
For in his termes he wol him so winde
And speke his wordes in so slye a kynde
Whan he comen shall with any wight
That he wol make him dote anon ryght
But it a fende be as him selfe is
Ful many a man hath he begyled er this
And mo wol, yf that he may lyue a while
And yet men ryden & gone ful many a myle
Him for to seke, and haue aquayntaunce
Not knowyng of his false gouernaunce
And yf ye lust to gyue me audyence
I wol it tellen here in your presence.

¶But worthyful chanons cryst̄ouse
Ne demeth not that I sclaunder your house
Although my tale of a chanon be
Of euery order some shrewe is parde
And god forbyd that al a company
Shuld rue a synguler mans folye
To slaunder you is not myne entente
But to correcte that mysse is mente
This tale was not onely tolde for you
But eke for other mo, ye wot wel how
That among Cristes apostles twelue
Ther was no traitour but Judas him selue
Thā why shuld the remnaunt haue blame
That giltelesse were, by you I say the same
Saue onely this, if ye wol herken me
If any Judas in your couent be
Remeueth him betyme, I you rede
If shame or losse may causen any drede
And be nothyng displesed I you pray
But in this case herkeneth what I say.

In London was a prest annuellere
That therin had dwelt many a yere
Which was so plesaunt and so seruysable
Unto the wyfe, where he was at table
That she wold suffre him nothyng to paye
For borde ne clothyng, went he neuer so gay
And spendyng syluer had he right ynowe
Therof no force, I wol procede as nowe
And tell forth my tale of the chanon
That brought this prest to confusion
¶This falle chanon came vpon a day
Unto this prestes chambre, where he lay
Besechyng him to lene him a certayn
Of gold, and he wold quite him ayen
Lenerth me a marke (qō he) but dayes thre
And at my day I woll quite it the
And if it so be, that thou fynde me false
Another day hange me by the halse
This prest tok him a marke, & that swith
And this chanon him thanked oft̄e syth
And tok his leaue, and went forth his wey
And at thirde day brought his money
And to this prest he tok this golde ayen
Wherof this prest was glad and fayn
¶Certes (qō he) nothyng anoyeth me
To lene a man a nobie, two or thre
Or what thyng were in my possessyon
Whan he so trewe is of condicion
That in no wise he breke wol his day
To such a man I can neuer say nay.
What qō this chanon, shulde I be untrewe
Nay, that were thyng fallen of newe
Trouth is a thing that I wol euer kepe
Unto the day, in whiche I shall crepe
Into my graue, or elis god forbede
Beleueth this as siker as your crede
God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayde
That there nas neuer man yet yuel apaide
For golde ne syluer that he to me lent
Ne neuer falshede in myne herte I ment.
And sir (qō he) nowe of my prluete
Sens ye so goodly the haue ben to me
And kythe to me so great gentilnesse
Somwhat to quite with your kyndernesse
I wol you shewe, if ye wol it lere
(I shal it shewe to you anon right here)
Howe I can werch in philosophye
Taketh good hede, ye shal it se with your eye
That I wol done a maistrye or I go.
¶Ye sir (qō the prest) and wol ye so
Wary therof I pray you hertely.
¶At your commaundement sir truely
(qō the chanon) and eis god forbede
Lo how this theke couthe his seruice bede
Full sothe it is that such prolered seruyse
Stynketh, as witnesseth the olde wyse
And that ful sone I wol it berykye
In this chanon, rote of al trecherye
That euermore delyte hath and gladnesse
Such fēdely thoughtes in his herte empresse
How cristes people he may to mischefe bring
God kepe vs from his false dissimulyng
¶What wil this prest vō whom þ he delte
Ne of his harme cōmyng nothyng he felte
O sely prest, O sely innocent
With coueityse anon thou shalte be blente
O graceles, ful blynd is thy conceite
Nothyng arte thou ware of his deseyte
Whiche that this fore hath shapen to the
His wylye wrenches thou mayst not fle
Wherfore to goto the conclusion
That refereth to thy confusyon
Unhappye man, anon I wol me hye
To tell thyne vnwytte ne thy folye
And eke the falsnesse of that other wretche
As ferforth as my conning wol stretche
¶This chanon was my lorde ye wold wene
Or host in fayth, and by the heuen quene
It was another chanon, and not he
That can an hundred folde more subtelte
He hath betrayed folke many a tyme
Of his falsnesse it doleth me to ryme
Euer whan I speke of his falsehed
For shame of him, my chekes waxen red
Algates they begynnen for to glowe

for rednesse haue I none, right wel I know
In my visage, for lames dyuerse
Of metals, which ye haue herde me reherse
Consumed and wasted hath my rednesse
Now take hede of this chanons cursednesse.
Sir (qō he) to the priest, let your man gon
For quicksyluer, that we it had anon
And let him bring vnces two or three
And whan he cometh, as fast shal ye se
A wonder thing, which ye saw neuer er this
Sir (qō the priest) it shal be done twys
He bad his seruaunt fetche him this thing
And he al redy was at his byddyng
And went him forth, and came anon agayne
With this quicke syluer, shortly for to sayne
And toke these vnces three to the chanoun
And he hem layde wel and fayre adoun
And bad the seruaunt coles for to bring
That he anon might go to his werkyng.
¶ The coles right anon were set
And this chanon toke out a crosselet
Of his bosome, and shewed it to the priest
This instrument (qō he) which ꝑ thou seest
Take in thy honde, and put thy selfe therin
Of this quicksyluer an vnce and begyn
In the name of Christ to werke a philosopher
There be ful fewe, whiche I wolde it profer
To shewe hem so muche of my science
For here shul ye se by experience
That this quicksyluer I will mortifye
Right in your syght anon withouten lye
And make it as good syluer and as fyne
As there is any in your purse or myne
Or els where, and make it malliable
And els holde me false and vnstable
Amonges folke euer to appere.
¶ I haue a poudre, that cost me dere
Shal make al good, for it is cause of all
My comming, which I you shewe shall
Voydeth your man, and let him be therout
And shet the doore, whyles we ben about
Our priuetie, that no man vs espye
Whyles that we werken in our philosophye.
Al as he bad, fulfylled was in dede
This yike seruaunt anon out yede
And hys maister shet the doore anon
And to her labour spedily they gon
This priest at this cursed chanons bydding
Vpon the fyre anon set this thing
And blewe the fyre, and besyed him ful faste
And this chanon into this crosselet caste
I ponder, I not wherof it was
Ymade, eyther of chalke, erthe, or glasse
Or somwhat els, was not worthe a flye
To diynde with this priest, and bad him hye
These coles for to couchen all aboue
The crosselet, for in token that I the loue
(Quod this chanon) thyn hondes two
Shal werke al thing that here shal be do.
Graūt mercy (qō the priest) and was full glad
And couched coles, as the chanon bad
And while he besy was, this fendly wretche
This false chanon the foule fende him fetche
Out of his bosome toke a brechen cole
In whiche ful subtelly was made an hole
And therin was put of syluer limayle
An vnce, and stopped was without fayle
The hole with waxe, to kepe the limayle in
And vnderstandeth that this false gyn
Was not made ther, but it was made byfore
And other thinges that I shall you tell more
Herafter, which that he with him brought
Er he came there, to begyle him he thought
And so he did, or they went a twynne
Tyl he had turned him, coulde he not diynne
It duelleth me, whan that I of him speke
On his falsehede, fayne wolde I me wreke
If I wyst how, but he is here and there
He is so variaunt, he bydeth no where.
¶ But taketh hede syrs nowe for gods loue
He toke his cole, of whiche I spake aboue
And in his honde he bare it priuely
And whiles the priest couched besily
The coles, as I tolde you er this
This chanon sayd, freende ye done amys
This is not couched as it ought to be
But sone I shall amende it (quod he)
Now let me medle therwith but a while
For of you haue I pyte by saint Gyle
Ye ben ryght hotte, I se well howe ye swete
Haue here a clothe and wype away the wete
And while the priest him wiped hace
This chanon toke the cole, I shrewe his face
And layde it abouen apon the mydwarde
Of the crosset, and blewe well afterwarde
Tyl that the coles gon fall brenne.
¶ Now yeue vs drinke, qō this chanon then
As swythe all shal be wel I vndertake
Syt we downe, and let vs mery make
And whan this chanons brechen cole
Was brent al, the limayle out of the hole
Into the crosselet anon fel adoun
And so it must nedes by resoun
Sens it so euen aboue couched was
But therof wyste the priest nothyng, alas
He demed al the coles lyche goode

For of the sleight, nothing he understode.
And whan this alkamistre saw his tyme
Wherby sir priest (qd he) ye standeth by me
And for I wot wel ynogh haue I none
Goth walketh forth, & bring a chalke stone
For I wol make it of the same shappe
That an ynget is, if I may haue happe
And bring eke with you a holle of a panne
Ful of water, and ye shal se thanne
How that our besynesse shal hap & preue
And yet for ye shall haue no mysbeleue
Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence
I wol not ben out of your presence
But go wt you, and come wt you ageyne.
The chambre doze, shortly to sayne
They opened & shet, and went forth her wey
And forth with hem they caried the key
And comen ayen withouten any delay
What should I tary al the long day
He tolde the chalke, and shope it in the wyse
Of an ynget, as I shall you devyse.
I say he tolde out of his awn sleue
A teyne of syluer, ywell mote he cheue
Which that was but an vnce of weyght
And enketh hede now of his cursed sleyght
He shope his ynget, in length and in brede
Of the teyne, withouten any drede
Sodenly that the priest it not aspyed
And in his sleue ageyne he gan it hyde
And from the fyre tolde vp his matere
And into the ynget it put with mery chere
And into the water vessell he it cast
Whan that him lyst, & bad the priest as fast
Loke what ther is, put in thin honde & grope
Thou shalt fynde there syluer as I hope
What deuel of hel should it els be
Shaning of syluer, syluer is parde.
He put in his honde, and tolde vp a teyne
Of syluer fyne, and glad in euery vayne
Was this priest, whan he sawe it was so
Gods blessyng and his mothers also
And al hallowes, haue ye sir chanon
Said this priest, and I her malyson
But and ye vouchsafe to teche me
This noble craft and this subtelte
I wol be yours, in all that euer I may
Qd the Chanon, yet wol I make assay
The seconde tyme, that ye mowe take hede
And ben expert of this, and in your nede
Another day assay in myn absence
This disciplyne, and this crafty science
Let take another ounce (qd he) tho
Of quicke syluer, withouten wordes mo
And don therwith, as I haue done er this
With that other, whiche that now syluer is
This priest him besieth in al that he can
To done as this chanon, this cursed man
Commaunded him, and fast bisiet the fyre
For to come to the effecte of his desyre
And this chanon, ryght in the mean while
Al redy was, this priest eft to begyle
And for a countenaunce in his honde bare
An hallowe stycke, take kepe and beware
In thende of whiche an vnce and no more
Of syluer lymaile put was al before
Ysin his cole, and stopped with wexe wel
For to kepen in his lymaile euery del
And whiles this priest was in his bisinesse
This chanon with his sticke gan him dresse
To him anon, and his pouder cast in
As he did erst, the deuyl out of his skyn
Him rome, I pray to god for his falsherde
For he was euer false in thought and herde
And with his sticke, aboue the crosselette
That was ordayned with that false lette
He styrreth the coles, tyl al reiene gan
The warre ageyne the fyre, as euery man
But he a foie be, wote wel it mote nede
And all that in the hole was, out yede
And into the crosselet hastely it fell
The priest supposed nothyng but well
But besyed him fast, & was wonder fayn
Supposyng nought but rowmh, soth to sayn
He was so glad, that I can not expresse
In no manere his mirthe and his gladnesse
And to the chanon he profered eft ful sone
Body and good: ye (qd the chanon) anone
Tho I be poore, crafty thou shalt me fynde
I warne the yet in shorte more behynde
Is there any coper here within sayd he
Ye sir (qd the priest) I trowe there be.
Els go bye some, and that alwythe
Now good sir go forth thy way & hythe.
He wet his way, & with the coper he came
And this chanon in his honde it name
And of that coper waxed out but an vnce
Al to symple is my tonge to pronounce.
As to minister of my wyt the doublenesse
Of this chanon, rote of all cursednesse
He semed frendly, to hem ꝑ knew him nought
But he was fendly, both in worke & thought
It werieth me to tell of his falsenesse
And natheles, yet wol I it expresse
To the entent that men may be ware thereby
And for none other cause truely.
He put this vnce of coper into ꝑ crosselet

And

And on the fire as swythe he hath it set
And cast in pouder, & made the preest to blow
And in his wirkyng for to stoupe low
As he did erste, and al nas but a iape
Right as him lyst, the preest he made his ape
And afterwarde in the yngot he it caste
And in the panne put it at the laste
Of water, and in he put his own honde
And in his sleue, as ye byfore honde
Nerd me tel, he had a syluer teyne
Ye syth take it out, this cursed heyne
Unwityng this preest of his false crafte
And in the pannes botome he hath it lafte
And in the water combleth to and fro
And wonder preuely toke vp also
The coper teyne, not knowyng this preest
And by d it, and hent him by the breest
And to him spake, & thus said in his game
Stepeth adowne, by god ye be to blame
Helpeth me now, as I byd you whylere
Put in your honde, and loketh what is there.
This preest toke vp this syluer teyne anon
And than sayd the chanon, let vs gon
With these thre termes, which we há wrouzt
To some goldsmyth, and were it be ought
For by my fayth, I nold for my hoode
But if it were syluer fyne and goode
And that as swythe proued shal be.
Unto ỳ Goldsmyth, with these termes thre
They went, and put them in assay.
To fyre and hámer, might no man say nay
But they were as them ought for to be.
This sorted preest, who was gladder thá he
Was neuer byrde gladder ayenst the day
Ne nightyngale, ayenst the sesou of May
Was neuer none, that lyst better to synge
Ne lady lustier in carollynge
And for to speke of loue and womanhede
Ne knyght in armes, to don a hardy dede
To stonden in grace of his lady dere
Than had this preest, this craft to lere
And to ỳ chanon, thus he spake, and sayd
For the loue of god, that for vs all deyd
And as I maye deserue it vnto you
What shal this receit cost, tellerth me nowe
By our lady (qõ this chanon) it is dere
I warne you wel, saue I and a frere
In Englande, there can no man it make.
Nowzce (qõ he) now sir for gods sake
What shal I pay, tel me I you pray.
Iwis (qõ he) it is ful dere I say
Sir at one worde, if that ye lyst it haue
Ye shal paye fourty pounde, so god me saue
And nere the frendshyp that ye did er this
To me, ye shulde pay more swyz.
¶ This preest ỳ sũme of fourty pouñde anon
Of nobles fet, and tolde hem euerychon
To this chanon, for this like receyte
Al his worching was fraude and disceyte.
Sir preest he said, I kepe for to haue no loos
Of my crafte, for I wold it were kept cloos
And as you loue me, kepeth it seere
For and men knowe al my subtelte
By god men wolde haue so great enuye
To me, bycause of my philosophye
I shuld be deed, there were non other way
¶ God it forbid (qõ the preest) what ye say
Yet had I leuer spende all the good
Which that I haue, and els waxe I wood
Than that ye shuld fallen in such mischefe
For your good will haue ye right good preue
(Qd the chanon) and farewel graunt mercey
He went his way, & neuer the preest him sey
After that day: & whan that this preest shuld
Waken assay, at suche tyme as he wold
Of this receite, farwel it nolde not be
Lo thus beiaped and begyled was he
Thus maketh he his introduction
To bring folke to her distruction.
Considereth sirs, howe in eche estate
Betwyxt men and gold is debate
So ferforth, that vnnethes there is none
This moultiplyeng blyndeth so many one
That in good fayth, I trowe that it be
The grettest cause of such scarsite
These philosophers speken so mistyly
In this crafte, that men can not come therby
For any wyt that men haue nowe a dayes
They may wel chatter as dãgle as do ỳ iayes
And in her termes, set her lust and payne
But to her purpose shul they neuer attrayne
I mean myth it wol turne all to grame
And empten also great and heuy purses
And maken folke to purchase curses
Of hem that han also her good plente
O fye for shame, they that han be bzente
Alas, can not they flye the fyzes hete
Ye that it vsen, I rede that ye it lete
Lest ỳ ye lesen al, for better than neuer is late
Neuer to thziue, were to long a date
Though ỳ ye prolle aye, ye shal it neuer fynd
Ye ben as bolde as is bayarde the blynd
That blõdereth forth, & peril casteth he none.

Ye is as bolde to renne ayenst a stone
As for to go befyde in the way
Do fayen ye, that multiplyen I say
If that your eyen cannot sene aright
Loketh that your mynde lache not his syght
For though ye loke neuer so brode & starr
Ye shal not wynne a wyte in that chaffare
But wast al that ye may repe and renne
Withdrawe the fyre, lest it to faste brenne
Medleth with that arte no more I mene
For if ye done, your thrift is gon ful clene
And right as I swythe I wol you telien here
What ꝑ the philosophers sain in this matere
Lo thus saith Arnolde of the newe toun
As his rosarye maketh mencioun
He sayth right thus, withouten any lye
There may no man Mercurye mortifye
But if it be with his brothers knowlegyng
Lo howe that he, whiche first sayd this thing
Of Philosophers father was, Hermes
He saithe howe the dragon doutles
Ne dyeth not, but if he be slayne
With his brother: And this is for to sayne
By the dragon Mercury, and none other
He vnderstode ꝑ brimstone was his brother
That out of Sol and Luna were ydrawe
And therfore said he, take hede to my sawe
Let no man beſye him this arte for to seche
But he that the entencion and speche
Of philosophers vnderstonde can
And if he do, he is a lewde man
For this science, and this conning (qd he)
Is of the secre of the secres parde.
Also there was a disciple of Plato
That on a tyme sayd his maister to
As his boke Hermor wol here witnesse
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnesse
Tell me the name of the ryght stone.
And Plato answerd vnto him anone
Take the stone that Tytanos men name.
Which is ꝑ (qd he) Magnatia is the same
Sayd Plato ye sir and is it thus?
This is ignotum per ignotius
What is magnatia, good sir I you pray.
It is a water that is made I say
Of elementes four (quod Plato)
Tel me the rocke good sir (qd he tho)
Of that water, if it be your wyll.
Nay nay (qd Plato) certayne that I nyll
The philosophers wer ywrothe echone
That they shuld discouer it vnto none
Ne in no boke it write in no manere
For vnto Christ it is so lefe and dere
That he wol not that it discouered be
But where it lyketh his deite
Man to enspire and eke for to defende
And that him lyketh, lo this is his ende.
This concludeth I thus, that ꝑ god of heuen
Ne wyll not that the philosophers nemen
How that a man shal come vnto this stone
I rede as for the beste, let it gone
For who so maketh god his aduersarye
As for to werche any thing in contrarye
Vnto his wyl, certes neuer shal he thryue
Though that he multeplye terme of his lyue
And there a pyn, for ended is my tale
God sende euery true man bote of his bale.

Here endeth the tale of the chanons yeman, and here folowyth the doctour of physykes ꝓlogue.

When this yeman hys tale a
ded had
Of this false chanon, which
was so bad
Our host gan say, euerich man
wel saw
This ꝓrest was begyled, forth for to sayne
He wenyng for to be a philosopher
Ful he right no golde left in his cofre
And forthy this ꝓrest had all ther iape
This cursed chanon put in his boode an ape
But al this passe I ouer as now
Sir doctour of physicke, yet I pray you
Tel vs a tale of some honest matere
It shal be done, if that ye wol it here
Said this doctour, & his tale bygan anon
Now good mē (qd he) herkeneth euerichon

Here endeth the doctour of physikes ꝓlogue, and here begynneth his tale.

There was, as telleth Tytus Liuius
A knyght, ꝑ cleped was Virginius
Fulfylled of honour and of worthynesse
And strong of frendes, & of rychesse.
A doughter he had by his wyfe
And neuer had he mo in all his lyfe
Fayre was this mayde in excellent beaute
Aboue

Whom euery wight that man may se
For nature hath, with soueraine diligence
Formed her in so great excellence
As though she woulde say, lo I nature
Thus can I forme and paynte a creature
Whan that me lyste, who can me counterfete
Pygmalio not, though he alway forge & bete
Ey graue or paynte, for I dare well sayne
Apelles, or zeuxis, though they woulde werche in vayne
To graue or paynte, or forge or bete
If they presumed me to counterfete
For he that is the fourmer principal
Hath made me his vicar generall
To fourme and paynte erthly creatures
Right as me lyste, for al thinge in my cure is
Vnder the moone, that may wane & waxe
And for my werke, nothyng wol I axe
My lorde and I ben fully of acorde
I made her to the worshyp of my lorde
So do I all myn other creatures
Of what colour they be, or of what figures
Thus semeth me that nature woulde say.
This mayde was of age .xii. yere & tway
In which that nature hath suche delyte
For right as she can paynt a lilye whyte
And rody as rose, right with suche paynture
Hir payred hath this noble creature
Er she was borne, vpon her lymmes fre
Were alle dyghte as suche colours shulde be
And phebus died had her tresses grete
Lyke to the streames of his burned hete
And yf that excellent were her beaute
A thousande folde more vertuous was she
In her ne lacketh no condicion
That is to preyse, as by discrecion
As wel in body as in goste, chaste was she
For which she floured in virginite
With all humilyte and abstynence
With al attemperaunce, and pacience
With mesure eke, and berying of aray
Discrete she was in answerying alway
Tho she were wyse as Pallas, dare I sayne
(Her facunde eke, full womanly and playne)
No counterfeted termes had she
To seme wyse: but after her degre
She spake, and all her wordes more & lesse
Sowning in vertue and in gentylnesse
Shamefast she was, & maidēs shamfastnesse
Constant in hert, and euer in busynesse
To dryue her out of all slogardrye
Ne idlenesse had of her mouthe no maystrye
For wyne and youth done Venus encrese
As men in fyre wol casten oyle or grece
And of her owne vertue vnconstrayned
She hath ful often her sicke playned
For that she woulde flye the company
Where lykely was to treten of foly
As is at festes, at reuels, and at daunces
That ben occasions of dalyaunces
Suche thynges maken childryn for to be
To sone rype and bolde, as men may se
Which is full perylous, and hath ben yore
For al to sone may she lerne lore
Of boldenesse, when she is a wyfe.
And ye maistresses in your olde lyfe
That lordes doughters han in gouernaunce
Ne taketh of my worde no displesaunce
Thinke that ye ben set in gouernynges
Of lordes doughters, onely for two thinges
Eyther for you han kepte your honeste
Eyther ye han fall in freelte
And knowen well ynough the olde daunce
And conne forsake fully mischaunce
For euermore, therfore for Christes sake
Kepeth wel tho that ye vndertake.
Ca theeste of venyson that hath forlafte
Hys lyknesse and al his thewes crafte
Can kepe a forest beste of any man
Nowe kepeth hem wel, for & ye wol ye can
Loketh wel, for no vice that ye assent
Lest ye be dampned for your cuyll entent
For who so dothe, a traytour is certayn
And taketh kepe of that I shall you sayn
Of al treyson soueraynē pestylence
Is, when a wight betrayeth innocence
Ye fathers, and eke ye mothers also
Though ye han children, be it one or mo
Yours is the charge of al her sufferaunce
Whyles they ben in your gouernaunce
Beth ware, that by ensample of youre liuing
Either by your negligence in chastising
That they ne perysshe: for I dare wel say
If that they don, ye shall ful sore obay
Vnder a shepherde sofre and negligent
The wolf hath many a shepe & lambe to rent
Sufficeth one ensample nowe as here
For I mote turne ayen to my matere.
Ca This maid of which I tel my tale expresse
She kepte her selue, she neded no maistresse
For in her liuyng maydens myght rede
As in a boke, euery good worde and dede
That longeth to a mayde vertuous
She was so prudent and so bounteous
For which out spronge on euery syde
Both of her beaute and of her bounte wyde
That thorow y londe they preysed her echon

That loued vertue, shue enuy alone
That sory is of other mennes weie
And gladde is of her sorowe, and vnheie
The doctour maketh this discripcion
This mayde went on a day into the toun
Towarde the temple, with her mother dere
As is of yonge maydens the maniere.
¶ Nowe was there a iustice in the toun
That gouernour was of that regyon
And so befel, thys Justice his eyen cast
Upon this mayde, auisynge her ful fast
As she came forby, ther as the Judge stode
Anon his hert chaunged and his mode
So was he caught vp beaute of this maide
And to him selfe ful priuely he sayde
This mayde shal be myn for any man
Anon the fende into hys hert ran
And taught him sodaynly, by what sleight
The mayde to his purpose wynne he might
For certes, by no force, ne by no mede
Him thought he was not able for to spede
For she was stronge of frendes, and eke she
Confirmed was in suche souerayne beaute
That wel he wist he might her neuer winne
As for to make her with her body synne
For whiche with great deliberacion
He sent after a clyent into the toun
The whiche he knewe ful subtyll & ful bolde
This iudge vnto this clerk his tale hath told
In secrete wise, and made him to ensure
He shulde tell it vnto no creature
And if he dyd, he shoulde lese his hede
When assented was this cursed rede
Glad was the iudge, and made good chere
And yaue hym gyftes precious and dere.
¶ When shapen was al this conspiracie
Fro poynt to poynt, howe that his lecherie
Parfourmed shoulde be full subtelly
As ye shullen after here openly
Home gothe this clyent ꝑ hight Claudius
This false iudge, that hyght Appius
So was his name, for it is no fable
But knowen for an historiall thing notable
The sentence of it sothe is out of dout
This false iudge gothe nowe fast about
To hasten his delyte, al that he may
And so byfell, that sone after on a day
This false iudge, as telleth vs the storie
As he was wonte, sate in his consistorie
And yaue his domes vpon sondrye caas
This false clyent came forth a ful gret paas
And sayd lorde, if it be your wyll
As doth me right vpon this pytous byll
In whiche I playne vpon Virginius
And if he wol say it is not thus
I wol proue it, and fynde good witnesse
That sothe is, that my byll woll expresse
¶ The iudge answerd, of this in his absence
I may not yeue diffynite sentence
Let do hym call, and I woll gladly here
Thou shalt haue right, and no wronge here
¶ Virginius came to wete the iudges wyll
And right anon was radde this cursed byll
The sentence of it, was as ye shall here.
¶ To you my lorde Appius so dere
Sheweth your poore seruaunt Claudius
Howe that a knyght called Virginius
Ayenst the lawe, and ayenst al equite
Holdeth expresse ayenst the wyll of me
My seruant, which that is my thral by right
Which from min hous was stolen on a night
Whyles she was full yonge, I wol it prue
By witnesse lorde, so that ye you not greue
She is not his doughter, what so he say
Wherfore my lorde iustice I you pray
Yelde me my thrall, if it be your wyll
Lo thys was al the sentence of that byll.
¶ Virginius gan vpon the clyent beholde
But hastely, er he hys tale tolde
He wold haue defended it, as shulde a knight
And by witnesse of many a trewe wight
That all was false, that said his aduersary
Thys cursed iudge wolde no lenger tary
Ne here a worde more of Virginius
But yaue hys iudgement, and sayd thus.
¶ I deme anon this clerk his seruaunt haue
Thou shalt no lenger her in thyn house saue
Go bring her forth, & put her in our warde
This clerk shal haue his thral, thus I award
¶ And when this worthy knight Virginius
Through the assent of the iudge Appius
Must by force hys dere doughter yeuen
Vnto the iudge, in lechery to lyuen,
He gothe hym home, & set hym in hys hall
And lette anon his dere doughter call
And with face dred as a thefen colde
Upon her humble face he gan beholde
With fathers pite, sticking through his hert
Al wolde he not from his purpose conuert.
¶ Doughter (quod he) Virginia by thy name
There ben two wayes, either deth or shame
That thou muste suffer, alas ꝑ I was borne
For neuer thou deseruedest wherfore
To dyen, with a swerde or with a knyfe
Oh dere doughter, comfort of my lyfe
Whych I haue fostred vp with such plesaunce

That

That thou me were out of my remembraunce
O doughter, which that art my last wo
And in my life my last ioye also
O lemme of chastite, in pacience
Take thou thy dethe, this is my sentence
For ioue and not for hate thou muste be deed
My pitous honde mote smyte of thyne heed
Als that euer Appius the ley
Thus hath he falsely iudged the to dey
And tolde her all the caste, as ye before
han herd, it nedeth not to tell it more.
¶ O mercy dere father (qõ this mayde)
And with that word, both her armes layde
Aboute his necke, as she was wonte to do
The teres braste out of her eyen two
And sayd, O good father shall I dye
Is there no grace, is there no remedye
¶ No certes dere doughter myne (qõ he)
Than yeue me leaue father mine (qõ she)
My deth to complayne a lytel space
For parde, Jepte yaue his doughter grace
For to complayne, er he her slough, alas
And god it wot, nothing was her trespas
But that she ranne her father first to se
To welcome him, with great solempnite
And with that word she fel a swoune anon
And after, whan her swowning was gon
She riseth vp, and to her father saide
Blessed be god that I shall dye a mayde
Yeue me my deth, er that I haue a shame
Doth vp your child your will a gods name
And vp that word, she prayeth him ful ofte
That with his sword he shuld smit her softe
And vp that word, a swoune downe she fell
Her father, with sorowful hert and fell
Her heed of smote, and by the toppe it hente
And to the iudge he it yaue in presente
As he sat in dome in consistorie.
When the iudge it sawe, as saith ꝑ storie
He bad take him, and honge him also fast
But right anon al the people in thrast
To saue the knight, for routh and for pyte
For knowen was the iudges iniquite
The people anon had suspecte in this thing
By maner of this cliveners chalengyng
That it was by the assent of Appius
They wyst wel that he was lecherous
For which vnto Appius they gon
And hente him in prison right anon
Where as he slowe him selfe, and Claudius
That seruaunt was vnto this Appius
Was demed for to be honged vpon a tre
But Virginius, of his great pyte
So prayed for him, that he was exiled
And els certes he had ben begyled
The remnaunt were honged, more and lesse
That consented were to thys cursydnesse.
¶ Here may men se how sin hath his merite
Beware, for no mã wot how god wol smite
In no degre, ne in no maner wyse
The worme of conscience wol aryse
Of wicked lyfe, though it so pryny be
That no man wote of it but god and he
Whether he be leude man or lered
He not how sone he may ben afered
Therfore I rede you thys counsayle take
Forsake synne, or synne you forsake

¶ Here endeth the doctour of phisykes tale, and folowerth the wordes of the hoste.

Our hoste gan swere, as he were wode
Harowe (qõ he) by nayles and by blode
Thys was a false theefe, and a cursed iustice
As shamefull dethe, as herte may deuise
Come to the iustice and her aduocas
Algate this sely mayden is slayne, alas
Alas to dere abought she her beaute
Wherfore I say, that all men may se
That yeftes of fortune, or of nature
Ben cause of dethe of manye creature
Her beaute was her dethe, I dare wel sayne
Alas so pytously as she was slayne
But herof wol I not procede as nowe
Ben haue full ofte more harme than prowe
But truely myn owne maister dere
Thys is a perous tale for to here
But natheleste, passe ouer is no force
I pray to god to saue thy gentle corse
And thy vrinalles, and thy fyoldanes
Thyn ypocras, and eke thy galyanes
And euery boxe full of letuarye
God blesse hem and our lady saint Marye
So mote I the, thou arte a proper man
And lyke a prelate by saynt Runyan
Saue that I can not speke wel in terme
But wel I wote, thou dost myn hert to yerne
That I haue almost yraught a cardyacle
By corpus domini, but I haue tryacle
Or elis a draught of moyste corsyne ale
Or but I here anon a norther merye tale
My hert is lost, for pyte of this mayde
Thou bream, thou John pardener he sayde
Tell vs some merye tale, or sayf, right anon.
It shal be don (qõ he) by saint Runion

But

But first (qd he) here at this ale stake
I will bothe drinke, and eate of a cake
But right anone, these gentils gon to crye
Nay, let hym tell vs of no ribaudrye
Tel vs som mortal thyng, that we mow lere
Some witte, and than wol we gladly here
I graunte (qd he) trwys, but I moste thinke
On some honest thyng, whiles y I drinke.

Here endeth the wordes of the host, and here folowyth the prologue of the pardoner.

LOrdynges (qd he) in chyrche when I preche
I payne me to haue an hauteyn speche
And ring it out, as rounde as dothe a bell
For I can all by rootte, that I tell
My temte is alwaye, and euer was
(Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas)
First I pronounce fro whence I come
And then my bulles I shewe al and some
Our liege lordes seale on my patent
That shewe I first, my body to warrent
That no man be so bolde, preest ne clerke
Me to disturbe, of Christes holy werke
And after that, I tel forth my tales
Bulles of Popes, and of Cardynales
Of Patriarkes, and of bysshopes I shewe
And in latyn I speke wordes a fewe
To saver with my predicacion
And for to stere men to deuocion
Than shewe I forth my long christal stones
Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones
Relykes they ben, as wene they echone
Than haue I in laton a shoder bone
Whiche that was of an holy iewes shepe.
Good men say I, take of my wordes kepe
If that this bone be washen in any wel
If cowe or calfe, shepe, or oxe swel
That any wormе hath eeten, or hem stonge
Take water of this wel, and wash his tonge
And it is hole anon: and farthermore
Of pockes, and of scabbes, and euery sore
Shall shepe be hole, that of thys well
Drinketh a draught, take kepe of that I tel.
¶ If the good man that beestes oweth
Wol euery day, er the cocke croweth
Fastyng drinke of thys wel a draught
As thyder holy iewe our elders taught
His beestes and hys store shall multyply
And sire, also it healeth ielosye
For though a man be fall in ielous rage.
Let make with this water his potage
And neuer shall he more his wife mistryst
Though he in soth the defaute by her wyst
All had she taken preestes two or three
Here is a mytayne eke, that ye may se
He that his hande wol put in this mytayne
He shal haue multiplyeng of his grayne
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes
So that he offer good pens or grotes.
And men & women, one thyng I warne you
If any wight ben in this churche nowe
That hath done synne horrible, that he
Dare not for shame of it shriuen be
Or any woman, be she yonge or olde
That hath made her husbond cokewolde
Such folke shul haue no powre ne no grace
To offer to my relykes in this place
And who so fyndeth him out of such blame
Commeth vp and offre in goddes name
And I assoyle him by the auctorite
Whiche as by bulle was graunted to me.
¶ By this gaude haue I wonne euery yere
An hondred marke, sythen I was pardoner
I stonde lyke a clerke in my pulpet
And the lewde people byn downe yset
I preche so as ye haue herd here before
And telle an hondred iapes more
Than payne I me to stretche forth my neck
And este and west, vpon the people I becke
As doth a doue, sytteyng vpon a berne
My hondes and my tonge gon full yerne
That it is ioy to se my besynesse
Of auarice, and of such cursydnesse
All my preching is for to make hem free
To yeuen her pens, and namely vnto me
For myn entent is not but for to wynne
And nothyng for correction of synne
I recke neuer whan that they ben beryed
Thoughe her soule gon a blackberyed
For certes many a predycacion
Cometh oft tyme of yuel entencion.
¶ Some for plesaunce of folke, & for flatery
To ben auaunced by hipocrysy
And some for veyne glory, and some for hate
For whan I dare not other wayes debate
Than wol I stynge hem with my tonge smerte
In prechyng, so that he shal not asterte
To ben diffamed falsely, if that he
Hath trespased to my brotherne or to me
For though I tell not his propre name
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same

ye lygnes, or by other circumstaunces
This quite I folke, ȳ doth vs displesaunces
Thus put I out my penym vnder hewe
Of holynesse, to semen holy and trewe
But shortly myn entent I wol deuyse
I preche of nothyng but of couetyse
Therfore my teme is yet, and euer was
Radix omniū malorum est cupiditas
Thus can I preache ayenst the same vyce
Whiche that I vse, and that is auarice
But though myself be gilty in that synne
Yet can I maken other folke to twynne
From auarice, and sore hem to repent
But that is not my principall entent
I preche nothyng but for couetyse
Of this matere, it ought ynoughe suffise.
Than tell I hem ensamples many one
Of olde stories, longe tyme agone
For lewde people louen tales olde
Whiche thinges they can well report & holde
What trowe ye, whiles that I may preche
And wynne gold and syluer for to teche
That I wol lyue in pouert wilfully?
Nay nay, I thought it neuer trewly
For I wol preche and begge in sondry lōdes
I wol not do no labour with myn hondes
Ne make baskettes and lyue therby?
Because I woll not begge idelly
I wol none of the apostles counterfete
I wol haue money, mault, chese, & whete
All were it yeuen of the poorest page
Or of the porest wyddow in a village
Though her children shulde sterue for famyne
Nay, I wol drinke the lycoure of the wyne
And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun
But herkeneth lordynges my conclusyoun
Your lyking is that I shuld tel a tale
Now I haue dronken a draught of corny ale
By god I hope I shall tel you a thyng
That shall by reason ben at your lyking
For though myself be a full vicious man
A moral tale yet I you tel can
Which I am wont to preche, for to wynne
Now holde your peace, my tale I wol begin.

Here endeth the Pardoners prologue, and here folowerth his tale.

IN Flaunders whylom there was a company
Of yonge folke, that haunted foly
As hasard, ryot, stewes, and tauernes
Where as with harpes, lutes, & geternes
They daunce & playen at dyce night & day
And eten also, ouer that her might may
Through which they don the deuil sacrifice
Within the deuyls temple, in cursed wise
By superfluite abhominable
Her othes ben so great and so damnable
That it is grisly for to here hem swere
Our blessed lordes body they al to tere
Hem thought Jewes rent hym not ynough
And eche of hem at others sinne lough.
And right anon comen in tombesteres
Fetis and smale and yonge fayteres
Syngers with harpes, baudes, & wafreres
Whiche that ben verely the deuils officers
To kyndle and blowe the fire of lechery
That is annexed vnto glotony
The holy writte take I to my witnesse
That lechery is in wine and dronkenesse.
Lo howe that dronken Lothe vnkindely
Lay by his daughters two vnwetingly
So dronke he was, he nist what he wrought
And therfore sore repent him ought
Herodes, who so wol the stories seche
There may ye lerne, & by ensample teche
Whan he of wine was replete at his feste
Right at his owne table, yaue his heste
To sleen Johan the Baptiste ful gyltelesse
Seneke sayth eke good wordes doutelesse
He sayth he canno difference fynde
Betwixt a man that is out of hys mynde
And a man that is dronkelewe
But woodnesse that is fallen in a shrewe
Persueretth lenger than doth dronkenesse
O glotony, ful of cursydnesse
O cause first of our confusion
O originall of our dampnacion
Tyl Christ had bought vs wt his blode agayn
Lo howe dere, shortely for to sayn
Bought was first this cursyd vilanye
Corrupt was al this world through glotnye
Adam our fozn father, and his wife also
Fro Paradyce, to labour and to wo
Were driuen for that vyce, it is no drede
For whyles that Adam fasted, as I rede
He was in paradyce, and when that he

Ere

Ete of the fruyte, defended on the tre
Anon he was out cast to wo and payne
O glotonye, on the wel ought vs to playne.
¶ Oh, wyst a man howe many maladies
Folowyth of excesse and of glotonyes
He wolde ben the more mesurable
Of his diete, sittyng at his table
Alas the shorte throte, the tendre mouthe
Maketh that este, & west, north, and southe
In erth, in eyre, in water, men to swynke
To getten a gloton dayntie meate and drinke
Of thys mater, o paule wel cauȝt thou trete
Meate vnto wombe, & wõbe eke vnto mete
Shall god distroy bothe as paul sayth
Alas, a foule thyng it is by my fayth
To say thys worde, and fouler is the dede
Whan men so drinketh of the white and rede
That of hys throte he maketh hys privee
Through thylke cursed superfluite.
¶ The apostle sayeth, weping ful pitously
There walken many, of which tolde haue I
I say it nowe wepyng with pytous voyce
There ben enemies of Christes croyce
Of which the end is deth, wombe is her god
O belly, O wombe, O stynkyng cod
Fulfylled of donge and of corrupcion
At either ende of the foule is the soun
Howe great coste and labour is to fynde
These cokes how they stãp, stirre, & grinde
And turne substaunce in to accident
To fulfyl all thy lykerous talent
Out of the harde bones knocken they
The mary, for they caste it not awey
That may go through the gullet soft & soote
Of spicerye, of leues, barke, and roote
Shall ben hys sauce ymade by deyte
To maken hym haue a newer apetyte
But certes he that haunteth suche delytes
Is dede, whiles that he lyueth in the vices
¶ A lecherouse thing is wine and dronkennesse
It is ful of stryvyng and of wrecchydnesse
O dronken man, disfygured is thy face
Sower is thy breth, foule art ꝑ to embrace
And through thy dronken nose soweth ꝑ soun
As tho ꝑ saydest aye, Sampson Sampson
And yet god wot Sampson dronke neuer wine
Thou fallest, as it were a stycked swyne
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure
For dronkennesse is verey sepulture
Of mannes witte, and his discrecion
In whom that drinke hath domination
He can no counsayle kepe, it is no drede
Now kepe you fro the white & fro the rede
Namely fro the white wyne of Lepe
That is to sel in Fisshe strete and in Chepe
This wyne of Spayne crepeth subtilly
In other wynes growyng faste by
Of whiche ryseth suche fumositee
That when a mã hath dronk draughtes thre
And weneth that he be at home in Chepe
He is in Spayne, right at the towne of Lepe
Nought at Rochel, ne at Burdeaux toun
And thus wol he say, Sampsoun Sampsoun
But herkeneth lordinges o word, I you pray
That al the souerayne actes, dare I say
Of victories in the olde testament
Thorow very god, that is omnipotent
Were don in abstynence and in prayere
Loketh the bible, and there ye mowe it lere.
Loketh Attyla, the great conquerour
Deyed in his sleepe, with shame and dishonour
Bledyng aye at his nose in dronkennesse
A captayne shulde lyue in sobernesse.
And ouer al thys, auise you right wel
What was cõmaunded vnto Lamuel:
Nat Samuel: but Lamuel say I
Redeth the bible, and fynde it expresly
Of wine yeuyng to hem that haue iustice
No more of this, for it may ynough suffice.

And nowe that I haue spoke of glotonye
Nowe wol I defende you hasardrye
Hasarde is very mother of lesynges
And of deceyte, and cursed forswerynges
Blaspheme of crist, mãslaughter, & waste also
Of catayle of tyme, and of other mo
It is reprefe, and contrary to honour
For to be holden a comon hasardour
And euer the hyer that he is of estate
The more he is holden desolate
If that a prince vse hasardrye
In all gouernaunce and policye
He is as by comun opinyon
Holde the lesse in reputacyon
Antiochon ꝑ was holde a wise ambassadour
Was sent into Corinth ful great honour
Fro Calydone, to maken hem alyaunce
And when he came, happed thys chaunce
That al the greatest that were of ꝑ londe
Playing at hasarde he hem fonde
For which, as sone as it might be
He stale hym home ayen to his contre
And sayd, there wol I not lese my name
I nyl not take on me so great defame
Yow to alye you to none hasardours
Sendeth other wyser embassadours
For

for by my trouth, me were leuer dye
Than I shuld you to hasardours alye
for ye that ben so glorioufe in honours
Shal not alye you with hasardours
As by my wyl, ne by my treetie
This wise philosopher, thus sayd he.
¶ Loke the howe to kynge Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the boke sayth vs
Sent him a payre of dyce of golde in scorne
for he had vsed hasardrie there byfore
for which he held his glory & his renoun
At no value or reputacyoun
Lordes might fynde other maner play
ynough to drive the day away.

Now wol I speke of othes false & great
A worde or two, as other bokes entreat
Great swerying is thing abhominable
And false swerting is yet more reprouable
The hye god forbad swerying at all
Witnesse of Mathew, but in speciall
Of swerting, saith the holy Jeromye
Thou shalt not swere sothe thine othes, ne not lye
And swere in dome and eke in rightwysnesse
But idle swerying is a cursednesse.
¶ Beholde and se that in the first table
Of hye gods hestes honourable
How that the seconde heste of him is this
Take not my name in ydelnesse and mys
Lo, he rather forbyddeth suche swerting
Than homicide, or any other cursed thing
I say as thus, by order it stondeth
This knoweth they that his hestes vnderstondeth
How that the seconde heste of God is that
And further more, I wol the tel al plat
That vengeaunce shall not part fro his hous
That of his othes is to outragyous
By goddes precioufe herte, and his nayles
And by the blod of Christ, that is in Hayles
Seuen is my chaunce, and thyn fyue & thre
By goddes armes, if thou falsly play me
This daggar shall throwe thyne herte go
This fruite cometh of thilke bones two
forswerying, ire, falsnesse, and homicyde
Now for the loue of Christe, that for vs dyde
Leaueth your othes, both great and smale
But I that tel you a meruaylous tale.
¶ These ryottours thre, of which I tell
Longe erste or prime ronge any bell
Were set hem in a tauerne to drinke
And as they sat, they herd a bel clynke
Before a cors, that was caried to his graue
That one of hem gan call to his knaue
Go bette (quod he) and aske redyly
What cors is this, that passeth forth by
And loke that thou reporte his name wele.
¶ Sir (quod he) it needeth neuer a dele
It was me told er ye came here two houres
He was parde an olde felowe of yours
And sodamly was he slayne to nyght
for dronke as he sat on his benche vpright
There came a priuy thefe, men clepen dethe
That in this countray al the people slethe
And with his speare he smote his herte a two
And went his way, withouten wordes mo
He hath a thousande slayne, this pestilence
And maister, er ye come in his presence
Me thinketh that it were necessarye
for to beware of suche an aduersarye
Beth redy for to meten him euermore
Thus taught me my dame, I say no more.
¶ By saint Mary, sayd this tauernere
The childe saith sothe, for he hath this yere
Hence ouer a myle, slayne in a great village
Both man and woman, childe and page
I trowe his habytacion be there
To ben auysed, great wysdome it were
Er that he did a man dishonour.
¶ Ye gods armes (quod this riottour)
Is it suche peryl with him for to mete
I shall him seche by stile and eke by strete
I make a vowe, by goddes digne bones
Herkeneth felowes, we thre ben all ones
Let eche of vs holde vp his honde to other
And eche of vs become others brother
And we wol sle this false traytour dethe
He shall be slayne, that so many slethe
By gods dignite, er that it be night
¶ Togyder han these thre her trouthes plight
To lyue and dye eche of them with other
As though he were his owne brother
And vp they sterten all dronken in this rage
And forth they gone, towarde that village
Of whiche the tauerner hath spoken before
And many a grisly othe han they swore
And Christes blessed body they to rent
Dethe shalbe deed, and we may him hent.
¶ Whan they han gone not fully a myle
Right as they wold haue troden ouer a style
An olde pore man with hem met
This olde man ful mekely hem gret
And sayd, now lordynges god you se.
¶ The proudest of these ryottours thre
Answerd ayen, what chorle with hard grace
Why art thou al forwrapped saue thy face
Why lyuest thou so longe in so great age

¶ This olde man gan loken in his vilage
And said thus: for I can not fynde
A man, though I walked into Inde
Neither in cyte, ne in no village
That wol chaunge his youth for myn age
And therfore mote I haue myne age styll
As long tyme as it is goddes wyll.
Ne deth alas, nyl not haue my lyfe
Thus walke I lyke a restlesse caityfe
And on the grounde, which is my mothers gate
I knocke with my staffe erlyche and late
And say, leue mother let me in
Lo howe I vanyshe, flesshe, bloode, and skyn
Alas, whan shall my bones ben at reste
Mother with you wold I chaunge my cheste
That in my chamber longe tyme hath be
Ye for an heren clout to wrappe in me
But yet to me she wol not done that grace
For which ful welked is my face
But sirs, to you it is no curtesye
To speken vnto an olde man vilanye
But he trespace in worde eyther in dede
In holy writte, ye may your selfe wel rede
Ayenst an olde man, hore vpon his heede
Ye shuld aryse, therfore I you rede
Ne doth vnto an olde man no harme as now
No more than ye wold a man dyd you
Er age, if that ye may so long abyde
And god be with you, whether ye go or ryde
I mote go thider as I haue to go
¶ Nay olde chorle, by god thou shalt not so
Sayd these other hasardours anon
Thou partest not so lightly by saint John
Thou spakest right now of thilke traytor deth
That in this countre al our frendes sleth
Haue here my trouth thou art his espye
Tel where he is, or els thou shalt dye
By god and by the holy sacrament
For sothely thou art of his assent
To slee vs yonge folke, thou falsse theefe.
¶ Now sirs, if it be to you so lefe
To fynde deth, turne vp this croked way
For in that groue I lefte him by my fay
Vnder a tree, and there he wol abyde
Ne for your bost he nyl him nothyng hide
See ye yonder oke, right there ye shal him find
God saue you, that boughte agen mankynde
And you amende, thus said this olde man.
¶ Than eurtiche of these ryottours ran
Tyl they came to the tree, and there they found
Florevnes of gold fyne, coyned round
Wel nye a seuen bushels, as hem thought
No lenger than after deth they sought
But ech of hem so glad was of that syght
For that the florevns so fayre ben and bryght
That downe they sat, by the precyous hoyle
The worste of hem spake the fyrst worde.
¶ Brethern (qd he) take kepe what I sey
My wyt is great, though I borde or play
This treasure hath fortune to vs yeuen
In mirthe and ioyfe our lyfe to lyuen
And lightly as it cometh, so wol we spende
Hey, goddes precious herte: who wende
To day, that we shuld haue so fayre a grace
But might this gold be caried fro this place
Home to my house, or els to yours
(For wel I wote that al this golde is ours)
Than were we in hye felycite
But trewly by day it may not be
Men wold say, that we were theues stronge
And for our owen tresoure don vs honge
This tresour must ycaried be by nighte
As wisly and as slyly as it might
Wherfore I rede, let lotte among vs all
To drawe, and let se where the cutte wol fall
He that hath ye shortest cutte, with herte blythe
Shal renne to towne, and that ful swythe
To bring vs breed & drinke ful priuely
And two of vs shall kepe ful subtelly
This treasour wel, and if he wol not tarye
Whan it is nyght, we wol this tresour carye
By one assent, where as vs lyste best
That one of hem brought straste in his fist
And bad hem draw, and loke on whom it wold fall
And it fell on the yongest of hem all
And forth towarde the towne he went anone
And also sone as he was gone
That one of hem spake vnto that other
Thou wost wel, thou art my sworne brother
Thy profyte wol I tel the right anone
Thou woste wel that our felow is gone
And here is golde, and that ful great plente
That shal departed be among vs thre
But nathelesse, if that I can shape it so
That it departed were among vs two
Had I not done a frendly turne to the
That other answerd, I not how ye might be
I wold wel that the gold were ours two
What shuld we do, that it might be so
¶ Shal it be counsaile (said the first shrewe)
And I shall tell the in wordes fewe
What we woll done, and bring it well aboute.
¶ I graunt (qd that other) out of doute
That by my trouth, I wol the not bewraye
¶ Now (qd he) thou wost wel we ben twaine
And twayn of vs shall stronger be than one

Loke

Loke whan he is set, and than anone
Lyfte as though thou woldest ꝙ him play
And I shal ryuen him thꝛough ꝑ sides tway
Whiles ꝑ thou strugglest ꝙ him as in game
And with thy dagger, loke thou do the same
And than shall all the gold departed be
My dere frende, betwyxt the and me
Than may we bothe our lustes fulfyll
And play at dice, right at our owen wyll
And thus accoꝛded ben these thꝛewes tway
To slee the thirde, as ye herde me say.

This yongest, whiche ꝑ went to the towne
Ful often in his hert he rolled vp and downe
The beautie of these florens fayre & bright
O lord (qꝺ he) if so were that I might
Have al this tresour to my selfe alone
There nys no man, that lyueth vnder trone
Of god, that shuld lyue so mery as I
And at the last the fende our enemy
Put in his thought that he shuld poyson bey
With which he might sleen his felowes twey
For why, the fende fonde him in suche lyuing
That he had leue to soꝛowe him to bring
For this was vtterly his entente
To slen hem both, and neuer to repente.
And forthe he goth, no lenger wold he tary
Into the towne, vnto a potecary
And pꝛayde him that he wold him sell
Some poison, that he might his rattes quell
And eke there was a polkat in his hawe
That as he sayd, his capons had ypawe
And sayd, he wold wreken him yf ꝑ he might
Of vermyn, that distroyed hem by nyght.
The potycary answerd, thou shalt haue
A thyng, as wisly god my soule saue
In all this worlde there nys a creature
That eteth oꝛ dꝛinketh of this confecture
Not but ꝑ mountenaūce of a corne of whete
That he ne shall his lyfe anon forlete
Ye sterue he shal, and that in lesse whyle
Than ꝑ woldest gon a pace, not but a myle
This poison is so sterke and so violent.
This cursed man hath in his honde hent
This poyson in a boxe, and sythe he ran
Into the next strete vnto a man
And boꝛowed him large bottels thꝛe
And in the two, the poyson poured he
The thirde he kept clene foꝛ his dꝛinke
For al the night he thope him foꝛ to swynke
In caryeng of the golde out of that place
And whan this ryotour, with soꝛye grace
Had fylde with him his great bottels thꝛe
To his felowes, ayen repayꝛed he.

What nedeth it therof to sermon moꝛe
For right as they had cast his deth befoꝛe
Right so they han him slayne, and that anone
And whan this was done, than spake ꝑ one
Now let vs syt and dꝛinke, & make vs mery
And afterwarꝺ we wolne his body bury
And after that it happed hem par caas
The one toke the botel, therin the poyson was
And dꝛonke, and yaue his felow dꝛinke also
Thꝛough which anon they sterue both two.
But certes I suppose that Auicenne
Wꝛote neuer in no canon, ne in no fenne
Moꝛe wonder soꝛowes of enpoysonnyng
Than had these wꝛetches two in her endyng
Thus ended ben these homicides two
And eke the false enpoysonner also.

O cursed synne, ful of al cursydnesse
O trayteurs homicide, O wyckednesse
O glotonye, luxure, and hasardye
Thou blasphemour of Chꝛist with vilanye
And othes great, of vsage and of pꝛide
Alas mankynde, howe may it betyde
That to thy creatourr, which ꝑ the wꝛought
And with his pꝛecious blood the bought
Thou art so false and so vnkynde, alas
Now good mē, god foꝛgyue you your tres-
And wate you fro ꝑ synne of auaryce (pas
Syn holy pardon, may you all waryssche
So that ye offꝛe nobles oꝛ starlynges
Other els syluer spones, bꝛoches, oꝛ rynges
Boweth your heed vnder this bulle
Cometh vp ye wyues, & offꝛeth of your woll
Your names here I enter in my rolle anon
Into the blysse of heuen shull ye all gon
I you assoyle by myn highe powere
Ye that offꝛen, as clene and eke clere
As ye were borne. Lo sirs, thus I preche
And Jesu Chꝛist, that is our soules leche
So graunt you his pardon to receyue
For that is best, I wol you not disceyue
But sirs, one woꝛde foꝛgate I in my tale
I haue relykes, and pardon in my male
As fayre as any man in Englonde
Which were yeuen me by the popes honde
If any of you wol of deuocyon
Offꝛen, and haue myn absolucion
Cometh forth anon, and knieleth here adoun
That ye may haue part of my pardoun
Oꝛ els taketh pardon as ye wende
Alwe and fresshe, at euery townes ende
So that ye offꝛen alway newe and newe
Nobles oꝛ pens, which ben good and trewe
It is great honour to euerych that is here

That ye may haue a sufficient pardoner
To assoyle you, in contree there ye ryde
For auentures, whiche that may betyde
For peraduenture there may fal one or two
Downe of her horse, & breke her necke a two
Loke which seurte it is to you all
That I am in your felowshyp yfall
That may assoyle you both more and lasse
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe
I rede that our host shal begynne
For he is most cursyest of synne
Cometh forth sir host, and offre first anon
And thou shalte kysse the reliques euerychon
Ye for a grote, vnbokyll anon thy purse.
¶ Nay nay (quod he) thā haue I chrites curse
Let be (quod he) it shall not be for thē the
Thou woldest make me kisse thin old breche
And swere it were a relyke of a seynt
Though it were with thy foundement depeynt
But by ꝑ crosse, which seint Helayne fonde
I wold I had thy coylons in myne honde
In stede of relykes, or of sanctuarye
Let cut hem of, I wol helpe the hem to carye
They shul be shryned in an hogges torde
This pardoner answered not a worde
So wroth he was, he wolde no word say
¶ Now (quod our host) I wol no lenger play
With the, ne with non other angry man.
¶ But right anon the worthy knight began
Whan that he saw that all the people lought
No more of this, for it is right ynought
Sir pardoner, be mery and glad of chere
And ye sir host, that ben to me so dere
I praye you that ye kysse the pardoner
And pardoner, I praye the drawe the ner
And as we dyd, let vs laughe and play
Anon they kyssed, and ryden forthe her way.

Here endeth the Pardoners tale, and here begynneth ꝑ Shypmans prologue.

Owe sayde our host
how you by Iohn the
Pardoner
he hathe vnbokeled well the
male
he hath vs tolde right a thrifty tale
As touching of his mysgouernaunce
I pray to god yeue him good chaunce
As ye han herde, of these ryottours thre
Now gentil mariner, herteily I pray the
Tel vs a good tale, and that right anon
It shal be done, by god & by sayntē Iohn
Sayd this maryner, as wel as euer I can
And right anon his tale he thus began.

Here endeth the Shypmans prologue, and here folowerth his tale.

A Marchaūt, whilō dwelled at saint Denise
That rich was, for wha-
che men held him wyse
I wyse he had, of estrith beaure
And comynable, & ver-
tuous was she
Which is a thing that causeth more dispen
Than worth is al the chere and reuerence
That mē hem done, at festes and at dāūces
Such salutacions and countynaunces
Passeth, as doth the shadowe on a wal
But wo is him that paye mote for all
The wyf husbonde algate he mote paye
He mote vs bothe cloth and eke arraye
Al for his owne worthyppe, richely
In whiche array we daunce lolyly
And if that he may not, peraduenture
Or elis lust no suche spence endure
But thynketh, that it is wast and ylost
Than mote another paye for our coste
And lende vs gold, and that is perilous
This noble Marchant helde a noble hous
For whiche he had al day great repayre
For his largesse, and for his wife was fayre
That wonder is: but herkeneth to my tale
Among al his gestes great and smale,
There was a monke, a fayre man & a bolde
I trowe thurty wynter he was olde
That euer in one, was drawyng to that place
This yonge monke, ꝑ so fayre was of face
Iquaynted was with this good man
Sithens that he first knowlege began
That in his house, as familier was he
As it is possyble any frende to be
And for as muche, as this good man
And eke this monke, of which I began
Were both two borne in one billage
The monke him claimed, as for cosynage
And he agayne said not ones nay
But was as glad therof, as foule of day
For to his hert it was a great plesaunce
Thus ben they knytte with eterne alyaunce
And

And eke of hem gan other for to enfure
Of brotherhed, whiles her lyfe may dure.
Fre was dam Johan, & namely of dispence
As in that house, and ful of dylygence
To do pleasaunce, and eke great costage
He forgate not to yeue the leste page
In al that house, but after her degre
He yaue the lorde, and sythen his meyne
Whan ý he came, some maner honest thyng
For which they were as glad of his cõmyng
As foule is faine, whã the sonne vp ryseth
No more herof as nowe, for it sytteth.
But so byfell, this marchaunt on a day
Shope him to make redy his aray
Towarde the towne of Bruges for to fare
To bye there a porcion of ware
For whiche he hath sent to Parys anon
A messenger, and prayde hath dan Jhon
That he shuld come to S. Denys to playne
With him, and wt his wife, a daye or twayne
Or he to Bruges went, in all wise
This noble monke, of which I you deuise
Hath of his abbot, as him lyst licence
By cause he was a man of hie prudence
And eke an officer, out for to ride
To seen her graunges, and her bernes wyde
And vnto saint Denys he cometh anon.
Who was so welcome, as my lord dã Jhon
Our dere cosyn, ful of curtesye
With him he brought a tubbe of malueysye
And eke another full of fyne bernage
And vitaylle, as was aye his vsage
And thus I let hem both eate, drinke, & play
This marchãt & this monke, a day or tway.
The third day this marchaunt vp ryseth
And on his nede sadly him auyseth
And vp into his countyng house goth he
To reken with him selfe, as wel may be
Of thilke yere, how it with him stoode
And how he spended had his goode
And if that he encreased were or none
His bokes and his bagges many one
He layth afore him, on his counter borde
Ful riche was his tresour and his horde
For whiche ful fast his counter doore he shet
And eke he nolde no man shulde him let
Of his accounptes, for the mene tyme
And thus he sate tyl it was passed prime.
Dan Johan was ryssen in ý morowe also
And in the garden walked to and fro
And hath his thynges sayd full curtesly.
This good wyfe come walkynge pryuely
Into the garden, there he walked softe
And him saluteth, as she hath done ful ofte
A mayden childe came in her companye
Whiche as her list, she may gouerne & gye
For yet vnder the yerde was the mayde.
O dere cosyn dan Johan, she sayde
What eyleth you so rathe to aryse
Nece (quõ he) it ought ynough suffise
Fyue houres for to slepen on a nyght
But it were for an olde palled wight
As ben these olde wedded men, ý lye & dare
As in a forme syteth a wery hare
Al forstraught, with hondes gret & smale
But dere nece, why loke ye so pale
I trowe certes, that our good man
Hath you laboured, sith this night began
That you were nede to resten hastely
And with that worde, he lough ful merely
And with his owen thought he wore all reed.
This fayre wife, gan to shake her heed
And sayd thus, ye god wot al (quõ she)
Nay cosyn myn, it stondeth not so with me
For by that god that yaue me soule and lyfe
In al the realme of Fraũce, is there no wyfe
That lesse lust hath to that foly play
For I may syngen alas, and welaway
That I was borne, but to no wight (quõ she)
Dare I not tell, how it stonte with me
Wherfore I thinke out of this world to wẽde
Or els of my selfe sone to make an ende
So full I am of drede and eke of care.
This mõke began vpõ this wife to stare
And sayd alas, nay nece god forbede
That ye for any sorowe, or for any drede
Fordo your selfe, but telleth me your grefe
Peraventure I may in your mischefe
Counsayle or helpe, & therfore telleth me
Al your anoye, for it shal secre be
For on my porthose I make an othe
That neuer in my lyfe, for lefe ne lothe
Ne shal I not of no counsayle you bewray.
The same ayen to you (quõ she) I say
By god and by this porthose, I you swere
Though men would me al in peces tere
Ne shal I neuer, for to go to hell
Bewray o worde, of thyng that ye me tell
Not for no cosynage, ne for alyaunce
But verely for loue and affyaunce
Thus ben they sworne, and here vpon kysse
And eke of hem tolde other what hem lyste.
Cosyn (quod she) if I had a space
As I haue none, and namely in this place
Than wold I tell a legende of my lyfe
That I suffred haue, sythe I was a wyfe

With myn husbond, though he be your cosyn
Nay (qd this mõke) by god a seynt Martyn
He ayȝ no moȝe cosyn vnto me
Than is this lefe, that hongeth on the tre
I clepe him so, by sayntē Denys of Fraunce
To haue the moȝe cause of aquayntaunce
Of you, whom I haue loued specyally
Aboue al other women sykerly
This swere I you on my profession
Telleth your griefe, lest he come adoun
And hasteth you, and goth your way anon.
My dere loue (qd she) O my dan John
Ful lefe me were this counsayle to hyde
But out it mote, it may no lenger abyde.
My husbonde is to me the woȝste man
That euer was, sithe the woȝlde began
But sythen I am a wyfe, it syt not to me
To tellen no wight of our pryuite
Neyther in bed, ne in none other place
God shylde I shulde tell it for his grace
A wyfe ne shuld not say of her husbonde
But al honour, as I can vnderstonde
Saue vnto you, thus much tel I shall
As helpe me god, he is noughte woȝthe at all
In no degre, the value of a flye
But yet me greueth most his nigardye
And wel ye wot, that women naturally
Desyren thinges syxe, as wel as I
They wolden that her husbondes shulde be
Hardy, and wyse, riche, and therto fre
And buxom to his wyfe, and freshe a bed
But by that like lorde that for vs bled
For his honoure, my selfe to arraye
A sonday next, I mote nedes paye
An hundred frankes, or els am I lorne
Yet were me leuer that I were vnborne
Than me were done a slaunder or a vilanye
And if myne husbonde eke myght it aspye
I nere but lost, and therfore I you pray
Lene me this sũme, or els mote I dey
Dan John I say, lene me this hundred frãkes
Parde I wol not fayle you my thankes
If that ye lyste to do that I you pray
For at a certayne day I wol you pay
And to don you what pleasaunce a seruyce
That I may don, right as ye lyste deuyse
And but I do, god take on me vengraunce
As foule as euer had Genilon of Fraunce.
This gẽtyl mõke answerd in this manere
Now truly myn owne lady dere
I haue (qd he) on you so great routhe
That I you swere, and plyght my trouthe
That whã your husbõd is to Flaũders ifare
I wol delyuer you out of all this care
I wol bring you an hundred frankes
And with that he caught her by the flankes
And her embraced hard, and kyssed her ofte
Goth now your way (qd he) al styl & softe
And let vs dyne as sone as euer ye may
For by my kalender it is pryme of the day
Goth now, & beth as true as I shal be.
Now eis god forbyd sir sayd she
And forth she goth, as ioly as a pye
And bad the cokes that they shulde hem hye
So that men might dyne, and that anone
Up to her husbonde is this wyfe gone
And knocked at his counter doȝe boldely.
Qui est la (qd he) peter ie am I
(Quod she) how long wol ye fast
How long eyme wol ye reckenand cast
Your sũmes, your bokes, & your thynges.
The deuel haue part of al suche reckenynges
Ye haue ynough (qd she) of goddes sonde
Come down to day, & let your bagges stonde
Ne be ye not a shamed, that dan John
Shal fastyng al this longe day gon
What let vs go here masse and go dyne.
Wife (qd this mã) lyteli canst thou deuyne
The curyous besynesse that we haue
For of chapmen, so god me saue
And by that lorde that called is seynt Ive
Scarsly among twenty, twelue shal thryue
Contynuelly, lasting vnto their age
We may wel make chere & good vysage
And dryue forth the woȝlde, as it may be
And kepe our estate in pryuyte
Tyl we be deed, or eis that we play
A pylgrimage, or gone out of the way
And therfore haue I great necessite
Vpon this queynte woȝld to auyse me
For euermoȝe we mote stonde in drede
Of happe and foȝtune, in our chapmanhede
To Flaũders wol I gone to moȝow at day
And come ayene as sone as euer I may
For whiche my dere wyfe, I the beseke
As be to euery wight buxom and meke
And for to kepe our good be curyous
And honestly gouerne wel our house
Thou hast ynough, in euery maner wyse
That to a thryfty huswyfe may suffise
Eke lacketh none array, ne no vitayle
Of syluer in thy purse thou mayest not fayle
And with ỹ woȝde, his counter doȝe he shette
And downe he goth, no lenger wold he lette
And hastely a masse was there isayde
And spedely the tables were layde

And

And to dynner faste they hem spedde
And rychely the chapman this monke fedde.
And after dynner, dan Johan soberly
This chapman toke a parte aparturly
And sayd hym thus, cousyn it stondeth so
That wel I se, to Bruges ye wol go
And seynt Julien spede you and gyde
I pray you cousyn wytely that ye ryde
Gouerneth you wel also of your dyete
Attemperatly, and namely in thys hete
Betwixt vs two nedeth no straunge fare
Farwel cosyn, god shylde you fro care
If any thinge there be by day or nyght
And it lye in my power or in my myght
That ye me wol cõmaunde in any wyse
It shal be done, right as ye wol deuyse
O thing or that ye go, if that it may be
I wolde pray you for to lene me
An hundred frankes, for a weke or twey
For certayne bestes, that I mote nedes bey
To store with a place that is ours
God helpe me so, I wolde it were yours
I shal not fayle surely at my day
Not for a thousande frankes, a myle way
But let this thyng be secrete, I you pray
For yet this nyght these bestes mote I bey
And farewowe wele, my nowne cosyn dere
Graunt mercy of your cost and your chere
¶ This noble marchaunt, gentylly anon
Answerde and sayd, O cosyn dan John
Now sikerly, this is a smale requeste
My golde is yours, whan that you leste
And not onely my golde, but my chaffare
Take what you lyst, god shilde that ye spare
But onethyng is, ye knowe it wel ynough
Of chapmen, that her money is her plough
We may creaunce while we haue a name
But goodnesse for to be it is a shame
Pay it ayen, whan it lyeth at your ese
After my might, fayne would I you plese.
¶ The hundreth frankes fet he forth anon
And priuely toke hem to dan John
No wight of this worlde, wist of this lone
Sauing this marchaũt, & dan Johan alone
They dranke & spake, & rome & whyle & play
Tyl that dan Johan rydeth to hys abbey.
¶ The morow came, & forth rid this marchãt
To flaũders ward, his prentes brought him
Til he came to Bruges, wel & merely auaũt
Nowe goth thys marchaunt, wel & besyly
Aboute his nedes, & byeth, and creaunseth
He neither playeth at dyce ne daunceth
But as a marchaunt, shortely to tell
He ledde hys lyfe, and there I let hym dwel.
The sonday next ỹ this marchãt was gon
To saint Denis is comen dan John
With crowne & berde al freshe & new shaue
In al this house, there nas so lityl a knaue
Ne no wight els, but he was ful fayne
For ỹ my lord dan John was comen agayne
And shortely to the poynte for to gon
This faire wyfe accordeth with dan John
That for these .C. frankes he shuld all night
Haue her in his armes bolte vpright
And this acorde parformed was in dede
In mirthe al night a besy lyfe they lede
Tyl it was day, ỹ dan Johan rede his way
And bad the meyne farwel & haue good day
For non of hem, ne no wight in the toun
Had of dan Johan any suspection
And forthe he rydeth, home to hys abbey
Or where him lyste, no more of him I sey.
¶ This marchaunt, whenended was ỹ faire
To saint Denis he gan for to repaire
And with his wyfe he maketh feest & chere
And telleth her that the chaffare is so dere
That nedes must he make a cheuesaunce
For he was bounden in a recognysaunce
To payen twenty thousande shildes anon
For whiche this marchaunt is to Paris gon
To borowe of certayne frendes that he had
A certayn frankes, and some with him he lad
And when he was comen in to the toun
For chierte and great affeccion
Unto dan John he first gothe him to ply
Nought for to borowe of him no money
But for to wete and se of his welfare
And for to tellen him of his chaffare
As frendes don, when they ben metten in fere
Dan John him maketh feest & mery chere
And he him tolde ayen ful specially
How he had bought, ful wel and gracyously
Thonked be god, all hole his marchaundise
Saue that he muste, in al maner wyse
Maken a cheuesaunce, as for his beste
And then shulde he be in ioy and reste
Dan John answerd, certes I am right fayn
That ye in heale be comen home agayn
And if I were riche, as haue I blisse
Of twenty thousãd shildes shuld ye not misse
For ye so kindely, this other day
Lent me golde, and as I can and may
I thonke you, by god and by saint Jame
But natheless, I toke it vnto our dame
Your wyfe at home, the same golde agayne
Upon your benche, she wote it wel certayne

By certayne tokens, that I can her tell
Nowe by your leue, I may no lenger dwell
Our abbot wol out of this toun anon
And in his company I mote gon
Grete wel our dame, myn owne nece swete
And farewel dere cosyn, tyll we mete.
¶ This marchant that was ful ware & wise
Creanced hath, and eke payde in Paris
To certayne lombardes, redy in her hondes
This some of golde, & gate of hem the bondes
And home he goth, as mery as a popingay
For wel he knewe he stode in suche aray
That nedes must he wyn by that vyage
A thousande frankes, aboue all his costage.
¶ His wife ful redy mete hym at the yate
As she was wonte, of olde vsage algate
And al that nyght in mirthe they be lette
For he was ryche, and clerely out of dette
Whā it was day, this marchaūt gan embrace
His wyfe al newe, & kyssed her in her face
And vp he gothe, & made it wonder tough
No more (qd̄ she) by god ye haue ynough
And wantonly ayen with him she playde
Tyl at the laste this marchaunt thus sayde.
By god (qd he) I am a lytel wrothe
With you my wife, although it be me lothe
And wote ye why? by god as I gesse
For ye haue made a maner of straungenesse
Betwixt me and my cosyn dan John
Ye shulde haue warned me, or I had gon
That he had you an hundred frankes payde
By redy token, & helde him cyrll apayde
For that I to hym spake of chenesaunce
Me semed so, as by hys countenaunce
But natheles, by god our heuen kyng
I thought not to aske of him nothyng
I pray the wyfe, ne do no more so
Tell me alway er that I fro the go
Yf any dettour, hath in myn absence
Ypayde the, lest through thy negligence
I might him aske a thing that he hath payde
¶ This wyfe was not a ferde ne affrayde
But boldely she sayde, and that anon
Mary I defye that false monke dan John
I kept not of hys tokens neuer a dele
He toke me certayne golde, I wote it wele
What cyrll the dome on his monkes snoute
For god it wote, I wende without doute
That he had yeue it me, bycause of you
To don therwith myn honour & my prow
For cosynage, and eke for belle chere
That he hath had ful often tymes here
But sirs I se it stonde in suche disioynte
I wol answere you shortely to the poynte.
Ye haue mo slacke dettours than am I
For I wol paye you well and redely
Fro day to daye, and if so be I fayle
I am your wyfe, score it on my tayle
Or els I shal pay it as sone as euer I may
For by my trouth, I haue on myn aray
And not in waste, bestowed it euery dele
And for I haue bestowed it so wele
To your honour, for goddes sake I say
As be not wrothe but let vs laughe & play
Ye shall my ioly body haue to wedde
By god I wyl not pay you but a bedde
For yeue it me, myn owne spouse dere
Turneth hither ward, and make better chere.
¶ This marchant sawe ther was no remedy
And for to chide, it was but a foly
Sithen that the thing may not amended be
Nowe wyfe he sayd, and I forgeue it the
But sithy lyfe, be no more so large
Kepe bet my good, this yeue I the in charge
Thus endeth nowe my tale, & god vs sende
Taling inough, vnto our lyues ende.

¶ Here endeth the Shypmans tale, and folowerth the wordes of our hoste.

Wel sayd̄ corpus domini (qd̄ our hoste)
Nowe longe mote thou saylle by the coste
Thou gentil maister, gentyl marinere
God geue ỳ mōke a shrewde fall quad̄ he re
I ha frowes, beware of suche a iape
The mōke put in the marchātes hode an ape
And in his wifes eke, by saint Austyn
Draweth no monkes more into your inne
But nowe passe ouer, & let vs seke about
Who shal tell nowe first of all this route
Another tale, and with that worde he sayde
As curteisly, as it had ben a mayde.
My lady prioresse, by your leue
So that I wist ỳ I shuld you not greue
I wold deme, that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so be that ye wolde
Nowe wol ye vouchsafe, my lady dere
Gladly (qd̄ she) and sayd in this maner.

¶ Here endeth the wordes of our hoste, & here beginneth the Prioresses prologue.

Domine dominus noster: quā admirabile est nomen tuum in vniuersa terra.

Lorde

LOrde our lorde, thy name how merueylous
Is in this wyde worlde ispradde (quod she)
For not onely thy laude precious
performed is, by men of dignyte
But by the mouthe of childzen thy bounte
parfourmed is, for on the breest sucking
Sometyme shewen they thyn herieng

Wherfore in laude, as I can best and may
Of the and of the white lylly floure
which that they bare, & is a mayde alway
To tellen a storie, I wol do my laboure
Nought that I may encrese her honoure
For she her selfe is honour and rote
Of bountie, next her sonne, of soules bote.

O Mother mayden, O mayden & mother free
O bushe vnbrent, brenning in Moyses sight
That ravyshedest downe fro the deyte
Through thin humblesse, the goost in the light
Of whose vertue, whem he in thyn herte pight
Conceyued was the fathers sapyence
Helpe me to tel it in thy presence.

Lady thy bounte, and thy magnificence
Thy vertue and thy great humilyte
There may no tonge expresse, in no science
For somtyme lady, er men praye to the
Thou goest before, of thy benignite
And gerrest vs the light through thy prayere
To gyden vs vnto thy sonne so dere.

My conning is to weake, O blisful quene
For to declare thy bigh worthynesse
That I ne may the weyght sustene
But as a childe of twelue moneth old or lesse
That can vnnethes any worde expresse
Right so fare I, and therfore I you pray
Gyderh my songe, that I shal of you say.

Here endeth the Prioresses prologue, and here folowerh her tale.

THere was in Asye, in a greate cyte
Amonges christen folke a iewrye
Sustened by a lorde of that countre
For foule vsury, and lucre of villany
Hateful to Christe, and to his company
And through the strete mē might ride & wēde
For it was fre, and open at euery ende.

A lytel schole of christen folke there stode
Down at ỳ farther ende, in which ther were
Childzen an hepe, comen of Christen blode
That learned in that schole, yere by yere
Such manere doctrine, as men vsen here
This is to say, to synge and to rede
As smale childzen done in her childehede

Amōges these childrē was a wedowes son
A lytel clergion, that .vii. yere was of age
That day by day to schole was his won
And also ek, where he sey the ymage
Of Christes mother, had he in vsage
As him was taught, to knele a down and say
An Aue maria, as he goth by the way.

Thus hath this wedow, her litel child itauzt
Our blisful lady, Christes mother dere
To worship aye, and he forzate it naught
For the sely childe, wold al day sone lere
But aye, whā I remēbre me on this matere
Saint Nicholas stōdeth euer in my presence
For he so yonge to Christ dyd reuerence

This lytel childe his lytel boke lernyng
As he sate in the schole at his primere
He (Alma redemptoris mater) herd syng
As childzen lered her antiphonere
And as he durst, he drewe aye nere and nere
And herkened to the wordes and the note
Tyl he the first verse couth al by rote

Nouzt wist he what this latyn was to say
For he so yonge and tender was of age
But on a day his felowe gan he pray
To expowne him the song, in his langage
Or tellen him why thys song was in vsage
This prayde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme, vpon his knees bare

This felowe, which that elder was than he
Answerd

Answerd hi thus, this song I have herd say
Was made of our blessed lady fre
Her to salewe, and eke her for to pray
To ben our helpe, & succour when we dey
I can no more expowne in this mater
I lerne songe, I can but smale grammer

And is this songe ynade in reverence
Of Christes mother, sayd thys innocente
Nowe certes I wol done my dilygence
To conne it al er Christemasse be went
Though that I for my primer shall be shent
And shulde be beten thrise in an houre
I wol it conne, our lady to honoure.

This felaw taught him homwarde prively
Fro day to day, tyl he couthe it by rote
And than he songe it wel and boldely
Fro worde to worde, acording to the note
Twise a day it passeth through his throte
To scolewarde, & homwarde when he went
On Christes mother set was al his entent

As I have sayde throughout the cite
This litel childe as he came to and fro
Ful merely than wolde he singe and crye
O Alma redemptoris mater, ever mo
The swetenesse hath his herte perced so
Of Christes mother, that to her to pray
He can not stynte of singyng by the way

Our first foe, the serpent Sathanas
That hath in Jewes hert his waspes nest
Up swalc and sayd, O ebrayke people alas
Is thys a thing to you that is honeste
That suche a boy shal walke as him leste
In your dispyte, & singen of suche sentence
Which is agaynst your lawes reverence

From thence forthe, the iewes han conspire
This innocent out of this worlde to chase
An homicide therto han they hyred
That in an aley, had a privy place
And as the childe gan forby to pace
This cursid iewe him hent, and helde faste
And cutte his throte, & in a pitte him caste

I say that in a wardrope they him threwe
Where that the iewes purged her entrayle
O cursyd folke, of herodes all newe
What may your yvel entent you anayle
Murder wol out, certes it wol not fayle
And namely ther ỳ honor of god shal spredc
The blode out cryeth on your cursyd dede

O mater, flowed bene virginite
Now maistc thou sing folowinge ever in oon
The white lambe celi fyall (qd he)
Of whiche the great evangelyste seint John
In Pathmos wrote, which saith ỳ they gon
Before this lambe, & sing a songe al newe
That never fleshly woman they ne knewe.

This poore widowe, awayteth al the nyght
After her litel childe, and he came nought
For which as soone as it was day light
With face pale for drede and busy thought
She hath at scole, and elswhere him sought
Tyl fynally, she gan so farre espye
That he was laste seyne in the iewrye

With mothers pyte, in her brest enclosed
She goth as she were halfe out of her mynde
To every place, where she hath supposed
By lykelyhode her childe for to fynde
And ever on Christes mother, mekc & kynde
She cryed, and at last thus she wrought
Among the cursyd iewes she him sought

She frayeth and she prayeth pitously
To every iewe that dwelleth in thilke place
To telle her, yf her childe went there by
They sayd, nay, but Jesu of hys grace
Yave in her thought, within a lytell space
That in that place, after her sonne she cryde
There he was caste, in a pitte bisyde.

O great god, that performest thy laude
By mouthe of innocence, lo here thy might
This gemme of chastite, this emeraude
And eke of martyrdome the rubye bright
There he with throte ycorue lay upright
He (Alma redemptoris) gan to synge
So loude that all the place gan to ringe

The christen folke, ỳ through the strete went
In comen, for to wonder on this thing
And hastely they for the provoste sent
He came anone, without tarieng
And herieth Christ, that is of heven kyng
And eke his mother, honoure of mankynde
And after that, the iewes let he bynde

This childe with pytous lamentacion
Was up taken, singing his songe alway
And with honoure, and great procession
Ther

They carryen him to the nexte abbey
His mother swonynge by the bere lay
Unneth might people that were there
This newe Rachell bringe fro his bere.

With torment & with shamful deth this one
This provost doth these Iewes for to sterue
That of this murdre wiste, & that anone
He nolde no suche cursydnesse observe
Yuel shall he have, that yuel wol deserue
Therfore with wild horse he did hem drawe
And afterwarde he honge hem by the lawe.

Upon his bere aye, lyeth this innocent
Before the chefe auter, whiles ỹ masse laste
And after that, the abbot with his convent
Hem spedde, for to bury hȳ as faste
And whenthe ỹ holy water on hym caste
He spake ỹ child, whē spryng was holy water
And songe, O alma redemptoris mater

This abbot, which that was an holy man
As monkes ben, or elis ought to be
This yonge childe to conne he began
And sayde: O dere childe, I nayle the
In vertue of the holy Trinite
Tell me what is thy cause for to syng
Sithens thy throte is cutte to my seming.

My throte is cutte, unto my nekke bone
Sayd this childe, as by way of kynde
I shulde have deyde, ye longe tyme agone
But Jesu Christ, as ye in bokes fynde
Wol that his glory laste and be in mynde
And for the worship of hys mother dere
Yet may I syng (O alma) loude and clere.

This wel of mercy, Christes mother swete
I loved alway, as after my conning
And when that I my life shoulde forlete
To me she came, and badde me for to syng
This antem verely in my dyeng
As ye han herde, & when that I had songe
Me thought she layd a graine upon my tonge

Wherfore I sing, & singe mote certayne
In honour of the blysful mayden fre
Tyl fro my tonge, of taken is the graine
And after that, thus she sayd to me
My litle childe, nowe wol I fetche the
When that the graine is fro thy tong ytake
Be not agaste, I wol the not forsake,

This holy monke, this abbot him mene I
His tonge out caught, & toke away the graine
And he yaue up the goste ful softly
And when this abbot had this wonder seyne
Hys salte teres trykled downe as reyne
And grofle he fel all flate to the grounde
And stylle he lay, as he had ben ybounde.

The covent lay eke upon the pament
Wepyng and herieng Christes mother dere
And after that they rysen, & forthe ben went
And toke away this martir fro the bere
And in a tombe of marble stones clere
Enclosen they his litle body swete
There he is nowe, god leve us for to mete.

O yonge Hewe of Lyncoln slayne also
With cursyd iewes, as it is notable
For it is but a lytel whyle ago
Praye eke for us, we sinful folke unstable
That of his mercy, god be mercyable
On us, his great mercy multyplye
For the reverence of his mother Mary.

Here endeth the Prioresse tale. And here folowech the wordes of the Hoste to Chaucer.

When sayd was this miracle, every man
As sobre was, as wonder was to se
Tyll that our hoste to japen began
And than at erste, he loked upon me
And sayde thus: what man arte thou (qd he)
Thou lokest, as thou wouldest fynde an hare
For ever upon the grounde I se the stare

Approche nere, and loke up merely
Nowe ware you sirs, & let this man have
He in the waste is shapē as wel as I (place
This were a popet in armes to enbrace
For any woman, smale and fayre of face
He semeth elvishe by his countenaunce
For unto no wight dothe he daliaunce

Say nowe sōwhat, sithēs other folke han said
Tel us a tale of mirthe and that anon
Hoste (qd he) ne be not evyl apayde
For other tale certes can I none
But of a ryme, I lerned yore agone
Ye that is good (qd he) we shullen it here
Som deynte thing, me thinketh by thy chere

Here endeth the wordes of the Hoste and here foloweth the tyme of sir Thopas.

LIstenyth lordynges in good intent
And I woll tell verament
Of myrthe and of solas.
All of a knyght was faire and gent
In bataylle and in turnament
His name was sir Thopas.
Ibore he was in ferre countre
In Flaunders, al beyonde the se
At Poperyng in the place.
His father was a man ful fre
And a lorde he was of thez countre
As it was goddes grace.
Sir Thopas was a doughty swayne
Whyte was his face as payne mayne
His lyppes rede as rose
His rudde is lyke scarlet in grayne
And I you tell in good certayne
He had a semely nose.
His heer, his berde was lyke safroun
That to his girdel raught aboun
His shone of cordewane.
Of Bruges were his hosen broun
His robe was of chekelatoun
That cost many a jane
He couthe hunt at the wylde dere
And ryde an hawkyng forby the ryuere
With grey gosshake on honde
Therto he was a good archere
Of wrastlyng was there none his pere
There any ram shulde stonde.
Full many a mayde bright in boure
They mourne for him paramoure
Whan hem were bet to slepe.
But he was chast, and no lechoure
And swete as is the bramble floure
That bearyth the reed hype.
And so befell upon a day
Forsoth, as I you tell may
Sir Thopas wold out ryde.
He worth upon his stede gray
And in his honde a launce gay
A longe swerde by his syde.
He pricketh thorow a faire foreste
Therin was many a wylde beeste
Ye bothe bucke and hare.
And as he pricketh north and este
I tel you, him had almeste
Betydde a foly care.
There sprungen herbes great and small
The lycorys and the setewall
And many a clowe gelofer
And nutmygges, to put in ale
Whether it be newe or stale
Or for to lye in cofer.
The birdes singen, it is no nay
The sperhauke and the popyngay
That joy it was to here.
The throstel cocke made his lay
The wodedroue upon the spray
He song ful loude and clere.
Sir Thopas fyl in loue longyng
And when he herde the throstel synge
He pricked as he were wode
His fayre stede in his pricking
So swette, that men might him wryng
His sydes were al blode.
Sir Thopas eke so wery was
For pryckyng on the softe gras
So fiers was his corage
That doune he layde him in that place
To maken his stede some solace
And gaue him good forage.
Oh, sayntt Mary, benedicite
What ayleth thys loue at me
To bynde me so sore.
Me dremed al this night parde
An elfe quene shal my lemman be
And slepe under my gore.
An Elfe quene wol I loue ywys
For in this worlde no woman is
Worthy to be my make in towne
Al other women I forsake
And to an Elfe quene I me take
By dale and eke by downe.
Into his sadel he clombe anone
And pricked over style and stone
An Elfe quene for to espye
Tyl he so longe hath rydden and gone
That he fonde in a prive wone
The countre of Fayrye. So wylde
For in that countre was there none
Neither wyfe ne childe
Tyll him there came a great Geaunt
His name was called sir Olyphaunt
A perylous man of dede.
He sayde chylde, by Termagaunt
But if thou prycke out of my haunt
Anone I slee thy steed with mace
Or euer I go out of this place
Here is the quene of Fayrye
With harpe and pype, and symphonye
Dwellyng in this place.

Or

Sir childe saide, als so mote I the
To morow wol I meten the
When I have myne armure,
And yet I hope par ma foye
That thou shalt wish this iaumer gay
Were it ful faire: Through thy mawe
Shal I perce, if I may
Er it be fully prime of the day
For here thou shalt be slawe.
Sir Thopas drowe aback full fast
This gyaunt at him stones cast
Out of a ful stalke strong.
But foyne escaped sir Thopas
And all was through gods grace
And through his fayre bering.
Yet lysteneth lordynges to my tale
Meryer than the nyghtyngale
For now I wol ye rowne.
How sir Thopas, with sydes smale
Pryckynge ouer downe and dale
Is comen ayen to towne.
His merry men commaunded he
To make him bord game and gle
For nedes must he fyght.
With a gyaunt, with herdes thre
For paramoures and lolyte
Of one that shone full bryght.
Do come he saide my mynstralcy
And iestours, for to tellen vs tales
Anon in myn armyng.
Of romaunce that ben royals
Of popes and of cardynals
And eke of loue longyng.
They fet him first the swete wyne
And mede eke in a mazelyne
And royall spicerye.
Of gyngerbread that was ful fyne
Of garlyk and eke comyne
With sugre that is trye.
He dyd next his white lere
Of cloth of lake fyne and clere
A breche and eke a sherte.
And next his sherte an haketon
And ouer that an habergeon
For percyng of his herte.
And ouer that a fyne hauberke
Was all wrought of Iewes werke
Full strong it was of plate.
And ouer that his cote armoure
As whyte as is the lylly floure
In which he wolde debate
His shylde was al of gold so red
And therin was a bores head
A carbocle by his syde.
And there he swore on ale and wyne
Howe that the gyaunt shuld be deed
Betyde what betyde.
His iambeux were of cure bully
His swerde sherpe of yuorye
His helme of laton bryght.
His sadel was of rych rewel bone
His bridle as the sunne shone
Or as the moone lyght.
His spere was of fyne cypres
That bydden warre, and nothing pease
The hed full sharpe ygrounde.
His stede was al dappel gray
He goth an aumble by the way
Ful softely and rounde in londe.
Lo lordes myn, here is a fyt
If ye wol any more of it
To tellen it wol I fonde.

Now hold your mouth for charite
Both knight and lady fre
And herkeneth to my spell
Of batayle and of chyualrye
And of ladyes loue drery
Anon I wol you tell.
Men speken of Romaunces of prys
Of Horne childe, and of Ypotys
Of Bevys, and of sir Gye
Of sir Lybeaux, and Blaundamoure
But sir Thopas, he bereth the floure
Of royall chyualrye.
His good stede he bestrode
And forth vpon his way glode
As sparke out of the bronde.
Upon his creste he bare a toure
And therin stycked a lylly floure
God shylde his cors fro shonde.
And for he was a knyght auentrous
He nolde slepen in none house
But lygge in his hood.
His bryght helme was his wanger
And by him fedde his destrer
Of herbes fyne and good.
Him selfe dronke water of the well
As dyd the knight sir Perseuel
So worthy vnder wede.
Here endeth the ryme of sir Thopas,
and begynneth ỹ wordes of our host.

No more of this for goddes dignyte
(Qd our host) for thou makest me
So wery of thy very leadenesse
That alle wyfly wode my soule blesse

Wyne ere ahen of thy haslty speche
Nowe suche a tyme, the byrell I beseche
This may wel be clepe tyme dogrell (qõ he)
Why so (qõ I) why wolt thou let me
Wore of my tale, than any other man
Sens that it is the beste tyme I can
By God (qõ he) playnly as a worde
Thy haslty tymyng is not worth a orde
Thou doest nought eis but spendest tyme
Sir at one worde, thou shalt no lenger tyme
Let se whether thou canst tel ought in gest
Or tell in prose somwhat at the lest
In which ther may be some mirth or doctrine
Gladly (qõ I) by goddes swete pyne
I wol you tel a lytle thinge in prose
That ought lyke you, as I suppose
Or elis ye be cerres to daungerous
It is a morall tale vertuous
Al be it tolde somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folke, as I shal you devise
As thus, ye wot that every euangelyst
That telleth vs the payne of Jesu Christ
He saith not al thing as his felowe dothe
But natheles her sentence is al sothe
And al acordeth in her sentence
Al be there in her tellyng difference
For some of hem saine more, and some lesse
Whan they his grouse passion expresse
I meane of Marke, Mathew, Luke, & John
But doutlesse her sentence is al one
Therfore lordynges, I you beseche
If that you thinke I varye in my speche
As thus, though I tell somwhat more
Of prouerbes, than ye han herde byfore
Comprehended in this lytle treatise here
To enforcen with the effect of my matere
And though I not the same wordes say
As ye han herde, yet to al you I pray
Blameth me not, for in my sentence
Shul ye not fynde mochell difference
Fro the sentence of this tretes lyte
After the which, this mery tale I write
And therfore herkeneth, what I shal say
And let me tell my tale I you pray.

Here endeth the wordes of our hoste and here begynneth Chaucers tale of Melibeus.

A Yonge man called Melibeus, myghty & ryche
gate vpon his wife that
called was Prudence, a
doughter which that cal
led was Sophie. ¶ Upon
a daye byfell that he for
his disporte is wente
to the feldes him to playe: His wife and
his doughter hath he lefte wythin his house
of which the doores were fast ishette. Foure of
his olde foos han it aspyde, and sette ladders
to the walles of his house, & by ỹ wyndowes
ben entred, and bete his wife, and wounded
his doughter with fyue mortall woundes, in
fyue sondry places: That is to say, in her fote,
in her handes, in her eares, in her nose, & in her
mouthe, and lefte her for dede, and tooke
her waye.

Whan Melibeus retourned was into his
house, and se al this mischefe, he like a mad
man rentyng his clothes, gan to wepe & cry.

Prudence his wife, as ferforth as she dare
besought him of his weppyng for to stynte:
But not for thy he gan to wepe and crye ever
lenger the more. ¶ This noble wife Prudence
remembred her vpon the sentence of Ouyde,
in his boke that clepeth is the remedy of loue,
where as he saithe, he is a foole that bylam
beth the mother to wepe in ỹ deth of her child
tyll she haue wepte her fyll, as for a certayn
tyme: and than shall a man done his diligence
with any able wordes to reconfort and pray
her of her weppyng for to stynte. For whyle
reason this noble wyfe Prudence, suffred her
husbonde to wepe and crye, as for a certayn
space: and whan she sawe her tyme, she sayde
him in this wise. Alas my lorde (qõ she) why
make ye your selfe for to be lyke a foole? For
sothe it appertayneth not vnto a wyse man to
maken suche a sorowe. Your doughter with
grace of god, shall warysshe & escape. And al
were it so that she right now were dede, ye
ought not as for her dethe your selfe mistem.
Seneck saith, ỹ wise mã shall not take to grete
discomforte for the dethe of his children, but
certes he shuld suffre it ỹ patiẽce, as wel as he
abydeth the deth of his owne proper persõ.
¶ This Melibeus answerde anon and sayde:
What man (qõ he) shuld of his weppyng stynte,
that hath so great a cause for to wepe: Jesus
him selfe our lorde, wepte for the dethe of La
zarus his frende. Prudence answerd, certes
wel

wel I wote a temperate wepinge is nothing defended to him ꝑ sorowful is, amonge folke in sorow, but it is rather graūted hi to wepe. The Apostle Poule vnto ꝑ Romans writeth, men shuld reioyce wt him that maketh ioye, & wepe with such folke as wepen. But thoughe a temperate weping be graūted, certes outrageous weping is defended. Measure of weping shuld be cōsydred after ꝑ loze that reacheth vs hereof. Whan ꝑ thy frende is deed (qō he) let not thin eyen to moist ben of teres, ne to moche drie: although teres comen to thyn eyē, let hem not fall. And whan thou hast forgon thy frende, do diligēce to get another frende: and this is more wisdom thā for to wepe for thy frēde whiche thou hast lorne, for therin is no bote. And therfore yf ye governe you by sapience, put away sorow out of youre hert. Remembreth you that Jesus Syrake saith, a man that is ioyous and glad in herte, it hym conserueth flourishinge in hys age: but sothely a sorowful hert maketh his bones dry. He saith eke thus, that sorowe in hert sleeth full manye a man. Salomon saithe, ꝑ ryghte as moughthes in the therbes sleyse anoyeth the clothes, and the smale wormes the tree, right so anoyeth sorowe ꝑ hert of man, wherfore vs ought as well in the death of oure children, as in the lost of our temporall goodes, haue pacience.

Remembre you vpon pacient Job, whan he had lost his children and his temporall substance, and in his body enburned and receyued full many a grevous tribulacyon, yet sayd he thus: Our lorde it sent to me, our lorde hathe bytake it me, right so as our lord wold, right so it be done, iblessed be the name of our lord. To these forsaid thinges Melibeus vnto his wife Prudēce answerd: Al thy wordes (qō he) ben true, & therto profytable, but truely myn hert is troubled wt this sorowe so grevously, that I not what to do. Let cal (qō prudence) your true frēdes al & thy lynage, which ꝑ ben wise, & telleth to hem youre case, & herkeneth what they say in counsayling, & governe you after her sentēce. Salomon sayethe, werke all thy thynges by counsaile, & thou shalte neuer rue. Than by counsaile of his wife Prudence, this Melibeus let cause a great congregacio of people, as surgyens, physicions, olde folke and yonge, & some of his olde enemyes reconciled (as by her semblaunt) to hys loue and to his grace: And therwithal there came some of his neighbours, that did him reuerence more for dyede thā for loue, as it happe ofte. There comen also ful many subtyl flatterers, & wyse aduocates lerned in the law. And whan these folke togiders assembled wer, this Melibeus in sorowful wise shewed hem his cace, and by the maner of his speche, it semed ꝑ in herte he bare a cruel yre, redy to don vengeaunce vpon his foos, & sodainly he desyred ꝑ werre shulde begyn, but nathelesse yet asked he counsayle vpon this mater. Surgyen by sperence and assente of suche as were wyse vp rose, & vnto Melibeus saide as ye shall here.

¶ Sir (qō he) as to vs surgiens apertayneth that we do to euery wight the best ꝑ we can, where as we ben withholden, & to our pacīēt that we don no damage: wherfore it happeth manye tyme & ofte, that whan two men haue euerych wounded other, one surgyen healeth hē both, wherfore vnto our arte it is not pertinēt to notifie werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes as to ꝑ warishing of your doughter, al be it so that perilously she be wounded, we shal do so ētire besinesse fro day to night that wt the grace of god she shall ben hole and sounde, as sone as is possyble. Almoste ryght in the same wise the phisiciens answerd, saue that they sayden a fewe wordes more: That right as maladies ben by her cōtraries cured, right so shall man warishe werre by peace. His neighbours full of envye, his fayned frēdes that semed reconciled, and his flatterers, maden semblaūce of weping, & empayred and agrutched moche of this mater, in prayesynge greatly Melibe of might, of power, of richesse and of frendes, dispysing the power of his aduersaries: and saide vtterlye, ꝑ he anon shulde wreken him on his foos, and begyn werre.

Up rose thā an aduocate that was wise, by leue & by counsayle of other ꝑ were wyse, and sayd: The nede for the which we ben assēbled in this place, is ful heuy thyng, & a gret mater by cause of the wrong and of the wickednesse that hath be don, and eke by reson of gret damages that in tyme cōmynge ben possybie to fallen for the same, & eke by reson of the great richesse & power of the parties bothe, for the whiche resons it were a ful great peryl to rēde in this mater. Wherfore Melibeus this is our sentence, we cōsaile you aboue al thig, that ryght anon thou do thy dylygence in kepyng of thy propre person, in such a wyse that thou ne want none espyes ne watche, thy body for to saue: And after that we cōsaile that in

thyn house thou set sufficient garrysons, so as they may as wel thy body as thi house defend: but certes to mouche wake, dyd to dan sodainly dengerous, we may not dense in so lyttel time that it were profitable, wherfore wil ashe leysre a space to haue deliberacio in this cause to deme, for the comen prouerbe sayth thus: hye that sone demeth sone shall repent. And the wise layne, thynke iudge is wyse that sone vnderstondeth a mater, & lageth by leyser: for al be it euening be nedfull, algate it is not to be reproued in reuynge of iugement, ne in denge-aunce takyng, whan it is sufficient & reasonable. And þ shewed our lord Jesu Christ by ensample, for whan þ woman was taken in aduoutry & was brought before his preses to knowe what shuld be don of her person, all be it þ he wist wel him selfe what he wold answere, yet he wold he not answere sodenly, but he wold haue deliberacion, & in the grounde he wrote ewite, & by this cause we aske deliberacion: and we shall than by the grace of God counsayle you that thyng that shall be profytable.

Up sterte than the yonge folke at ones, & the most part of þ cópany haue scorned this olde wise mā, & begō to make noise & saide. Right so as whiles þ yron is hote men shuld smyte, right so men shuld wreken her wrōges while that they bene fresshe & newe, and with loud voice they cried, werre, werre. Up rose thone of the olde wise, & with his hond made countenaunce þ they shulde holden hem styll & geuen him audience. Lordynges (qō he) there is full many a man that cryeth werre werre, þ wote full lyte what werre amouēteth. Werre at his begynnyng hath so great an entryng and so large, that euery wight may entre whan hym lyketh, & lyghtly fynd werre: but certes what ende therof shal falle, it is not lightly to know. Whan that werre is ones bigon, there is full many a childe faderles of his mother, þ shall sterue yong bicause of thilke werre, other els lyue in sorowe, or dye in wretchyd mesese: And therfore or þ any werre be bygon, men muste haue great counsayle and good deliberacion. And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by reason, wel we all at ones bygon for to rise for to breke his tale, & bydden him shut his wordes for to abregge: for certes he that preacheth to hem þ lyke not to here his wordes, his sermon hem anoyeth. For Jesus Syrach saith, þ wepynge in musike is a noyeful thyng. This is as muche to say, as muche anoyeth it to speke byfore folke as whyle his speche anoyeth, as it is for to synge byfore hem that wepe. And whan this wyse man saw þ him wanted audience, al shamefast he set him adoun ayen. For Salomon sayth, There as thou mayest not haue audyence, enforce þ not to speke. I se wel (qō this wise man) that þ cōmen prouerbe is sothe, þ good counsayle wanteth, whan it is most nede.

Yet had this Melibeus in his cōsayle many folke, þ priuely in his eere cōsailed him contrayre thynges, & counsayled him the contrary in generall audience. Whan Melibeus had herde that the greatest part of his counsayle were accorded þ he shulde make werre, anone he consented to her counsaylynge, & fully affirmed her sentence. Than dame Prudēce, whan þ she saw her husbōde thus fully avarde him on his enemies, & to begin werre: she in ful hūble wise, whan she saw her tyme said to his effect wordes. My lord (qō she) I you beseche as hertely as I dare or can, ne haue you not to fast, and for all guerdons yeue me audience. For peter Alphōs saith, who so doth to the good or harme, haste the not to quyte it, for in this wyse thy frende wol abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger lyue in dede. The prouerbe saith, he hasteth wel þ wisely can abyde: And a wicked hast is no profyte.

This Melibe answered to his wife Prudēce: I purpose not (qō he) to werke by thy counsayle, for many causes & resons, for certes euery wight wolde holde me than a fole. This is to say, if I for thy counsaylynge wolde chaunge thynges that be ordayned and affirmed by so many wise. Secondly, I say that all women ben wicked, and none good of hem al. For of a thousande men saith Salomon, I fonde one good man: but certes of all women fonde I neuer non. And also certes, if I gouerned me by thy cōsaile, it shuld seme that I had yeue the ouer me þ maistry: & god forbyd that it so were. For Jesus Syrake saith, that if þ wife haue maistry, she is contrayous to her husbōd. And Salomon sayth, Neuer as thy life to thy wife, ne to thy childe, ne to thy frende ne yeue no power ouer thi self, for better it were that thy childre aske of thy thynges that ben vnderthe, than thy self to be in the handes of thy children. And also if I wol werch by thy counsayle, certes my cōsayle must be secret til it were eyne that it must be knowen: and this ne may not be, if I shuld be cōsay-

ful by ꝑ. Whā dame ꝓpudence ful debonairly and with great patience, had herd al that her husbōde liked for to say, thā asked she of him leyence for to speke, & sayde in this wyse. My lorde (qō she) as to youre firste reson, it may ryghtly ben answerd. For I say that it is no nede to chaūge counsayle, whan the thing is chaunged, or els whan the thig semeth other wise thā it semed afore. And moreouer I say, though that ye haue swore & beheight to performe your emprise, and by iuste cause ye do it not: men shulde not say therefore ye were a fals & forsworn. For ꝑ boke saith, that ꝑ wise man maketh no lesynge, whan he turneth hys visage for ꝑ better. And al be it that your emprise be estadliched & ordeyned by great multitude of folke, yet dare you not accomplisshe thilke ordynaūce but yon lyketh: for ꝑ trouth of thinges and the profyte ben rather foūden in fewe folke that ben wise and ful of reason, than by great multitude of folke, there euery man cryeth and clattereth what him lykethe: forthy suche multitude is not honest. And as to the seconde reson, where as ye saye, that al women ben wicked: saue your grace. Certes ye dispyse al women in this wise, and he that al dispyseth, as sayth the boke, al displeaseth. And Senecke sayethe, that who so woll haue sapyence, shall no man dysprayse, But he shall gladly teche the scyence that he can, wythout presumpcyon or pride: and suche thynges as he nought ne can, he shal not ben a shamed to lerne hem, and to enquire of lesse folke than him selfe. And ꝑ there hath ben many a good womā, may lyghtly be proued: for certes sir our lorde Jesu Chriſt nolde neuer han disceñded to be borne of a woman, if al women had be wicked. And after that, for the great boūte that is in womē, our lorde Jesu Chriſt, whan he was ryſen fro dethe to lyfe, apered rather to a woman than to his apostels. And though that Salomon sayde, he founde neuer woman good, it folowethe not therfore that al women be wicked: for thoughe that he ne found no good woman, certes manye an other man hathe founde manye a woman full good and trewe. Or els paraventure the entent of Salomon was this, that in souerayne boūte he founde no woman, this is to say: that there is no wight that hath parfyte bountie saue god alone, as he him selfe recordeth in hys euangelie. For there nys no creature so good that him ne wanteth somwhat of the perfection of God that is his maker. Your thyrde reson is this, ye say that if that ye gouerne you by my counsayle, it shulde seme that ye had yeue me the maistry and the lordshyp of youre person. Sir saue your grace it is not so, for if so wer that no man shulde be counsayled but onelye of hem that han lordshyp and maistrye of his person, men nolde not be counsayled so ofte. For sothly thilke man that asketh coūsayle of a purpose, yet hath he fre wil whether he wol do after that coūsayle or non. And as to your fourthe reson, there as ye sayne that the iangierye of women can hyde thynges that they wot not, as who saith, that a woman can not hyde that she wote. Sir, these wordes ben vnderstonde of women that ben iangiers & wicked, of whiche women men sayne ꝑ thre thinges driuen a man out of his house, that is to saye, smoke, droppynge of rayne, and wycked wyues. And of such women Salomon sayth, that a man were better dwell in deserte, than with a woman ꝑ is riotous. And sir by your leaue it am not I, for ye haue ful ofte assayde my great syleuce and my greate pacience, and eke how wel that I can hyde & heale thinges that men oughten secretly to hyden. And sothly as to your fifte reson, where as ye say that in wicked counsayle women venquisshe men: God wote that thilke reason stante here in no stede: for vnderstonderth, nowe ye asken counsayle for to do wickednesse: And yf ye wolde werken wickednesse, and your wyfe restrayneth thilke wicked purpose, & ouercome you by reson and by good counsayle, certes your wife ought rather to be praised than blamed. Thus shulde ye vnderstonde the philosopher that saithe, in wycked counsayle women venquisshe her husbondes. And there as ye blame al women and her resons, I shall shewe you by many ensamples that many women haue be full good, and yet bene, & her counsaile holsom and profytable. Eke some men han sayd that the counsayle of women is either to dere, or to lyte worthe. But albeit so that full many women be bad, and her counsayle vile and nought worthe, yet han men foūde full many a good woman, & ful discrete & wyse in counsayling. Lo Jacob throughe the counsaile of his mother Rebecke, wan ꝑ benyson of his father, & the lordship of al his brethern. Judith through her good coūsaile, deliuered ꝑ cite of Bethule, in whiche she dwelt, out of the hond of Holofern ꝑ had it all beseged, & wold haue

Dauyd. Abigayle delyuered Nabal her
husbond for wronge / that kyng / that wold haue slayn
him / & apeased the yre of the kyng by her wyt
and by her good counsel. Hester by her counsell
enhaunced greatly / people of god in / reigne
of Assuerus the kynge. And the same bountye
in good counsaylyng of many a good woman
may me rede & tell. And furthermore whan /
our lorde had created Adam oure fourme fa-
ther, he said in this wise: It is not good to be
a man alone: make we an helper to hym selfe
semblable. Here maye ye se that yf that wo-
men were not good, & her counsaile good and
profytable, our lorde God of heuen ne wolde
neyther haue wrought hem, ne called hem the
helpers of man, but rather confusion to man.

And there sayd a clerke ones in two verses.
What is better than golde? Jaspre. What is
better than Jaspre? Wysdome. And what is
better than wysedome? Woman. And what is
better than a good woman? / is a good man.
And what is better than a good man? nothing.
And sir, by many other reasons maye ye lerne,
that many women ben good, and eke her coun-
saile good and profytable. And therefore syr,
if that ye wol truste to my counsayle, I shall
restore you your doughter hole and sounde, &
eke that I wol do you so muche, that ye shall
haue honour in this case.

Whan Prudence had herd the wordes of his
wyfe Prudence, he said thus. I se well that /
wordes of Salomon be sooth. For he saith, the
wordes that be spoke discretly by ordinaunce
ben honycombes, for they yeuen swetnesse to
the soule, and holsomnesse to the body. And
wyfe by cause of thy swete wordes, and eke
for I haue proued and assayed thy great sa-
pyence and thy great trouthe: I wol gouerne
me by thy counsayle in al thing.

Now sir (qd dame Prudence) and sythens
that ye vouchsafe to be gouerned by my coun
sayle, I wol enforme you howe that ye shall
gouerne your selfe in chosynge of your coun-
saylours. Ye shal first in al your werke meke-
ly beseche vnto the hye god that he wold be
your counsayloure, and shapen you to suche
entent that he yeue you counsayle & comfort,
as taught Tobye his sonne. At all tymes
thou shalte blysse god, and pray him to dresse
thy wayes, and lete ever that thy counsayles
be ever in him euer more. Saynt James sayth,
if any man of you haue nede of sapience, aske
it of god. And afterwarde, than shullen ye
take counsayle in youre selfe, & examyne well
youre owne thoughtes, of suche thynges as
you thynken that ben best for youre profyte.
And than shal ye dryue fro you best thynges
that be contrarious to good counsayle: that is
to say, ire, couetyse, and hastynesse.

Hem bi that wyl worth counsayle of hym selfe,
certes he must be wel bysyed and besy vpon
hym selfe, for many causes. The first is thys
ye that haue great ire and wrath in hym selfe
he weneth alway that he may do thyng that
he may not do. And secondly, he that is ygnorant
and vnwyse, he may not well deme: And he
that may not well deme, may not well counsayl.
The thyrde is this, he that is ygnorant & vnwyse,
as saith Seneke, maye not spede but blame-
full thynges, and with thilke wycked wordes
he stryueth other folke to anger & to vre. And
eke syr ye muste driue couetyse oute of youre
herte. For the Apostle sayth, that couetyse is
the rote of al harmes. And reuleth right wel
that a couetous man ne can not deme ne thinke
but onely to fulfyll the ende of his couetyse:
and certes that ne may neuer be accomplished,
for euermore, the more habundaunce that he
hath of richesses, the more he desyreth. And syr
ye muste also dryue oute of youre herte hasty-
nesse: for certes ye may not deme for the best
a sodayn thought that falleth in your hert,
but ye muste auyse you on it tal ofte: for as
ye haue herd here byfore, the comen prouerbe
is this. He that soone demeth, soone repenteth.
Syr, ye ne be not alway in lyke disposicion,
for certes some thyng that semeth sometime to
you that is good for to do, an other tyme it se-
meth to you the contrarye.

And whan ye han taken counsayle in youre
selfe, & han demed by good deliberacyon such
thynge as you semeth beste, than rede I you
that ye kepe it secrete. Discouere ye not your
counsayle to no person, but if so be / ye were
siker ly that through your discouerynge, your
condicion shal be to you the more profytable.
For Ihesus Syrake sayth: neither to thy fo-
ne to thy frende discouere not thy secret, ne thy
folye: for they wol yeue you audyence and lo-
kyng, and supportacion in your presence, and
scorne you in her abstence. Another clerk saith,
that scarsly shall you fynde anye person that
may kepe counsaile secretly. The boke sayth,
while / thou kepest thy counsaile in thyn her-
te, thou kepest it in thy pryson: and whan thou
bewrayest thy counsaile to any wight, he ho-

der

ueth the in his snare. And therfore you is better to hyde your counsayle in your hert, than to pray him to whom ye have bewrayde your counsayle, that he wolle kepe it close fro you. For Seneca sayeth: If so be that thou mayst not thy owne counsayle hyde, howe darste thou pray any other wight thy counsayle secrete to kepe. But nathelesse if thou wene thereby that the bewrayeng of thy counsayle to a person wolle make thy condicion stonde in the better plyte, than shalte thou tell hym thy counsayle in this wyse. First thou shalte make no semblant whether the were lever peace or warre, of this or that, ne shewe him not thy wylle nor thy entent: for trustе wel that comenly these counsaylours ben flatterers, namely the counsaylours of great lordes, for they enforce them alway rather to speke pleasaunt wordes, enclynge to the lordes lyste, than wordes that been profitable, and therfore men say that the eyche man hath selde good counsayle, but yf he have it of hym selfe. And after that thou shalt consider thy frendes and thyn enemyes. And as touchynge thy frendes, thou shalte consider whiche of hem ben most faythful and moste wyse, and eldest, and moste approved in counsaylynge: and of hem shalte thou aske thy counsayle, as the case requireth.

I say, that first ye shal call to your counsaile your frendes that ben trewe. For Salomon sayeth: that right as the hearte of a man delyteth in sauoure that is sote, right so the counsayle of trewe frendes yeueth swetnesse to the soule. And he sayethe also, there may nothyng be likened to the trewe frend: for certes golde ne syluer be not so muche worth as the good wyl of a trewe frende. And also he sayth that a trewe frende is a strong defence, who so that it findeth hath a great treasure. Than shal ye also consider if that your true frendes be discrete and wise: for the boke sayth, aske alway thy counsayle of them that be wyse. And by this same reason shal ye call to your counsayle your frendes that ben of age, suche as seme and ben expert in many thynges, and ben approued in counsaylyng. For the boke sayethe, that in olde men is sapience, and in longe tyme the prudence. And Tullius sayth, that greate thynges bennot aye accomplyshed by strength ne by delyuernesse of body, but by counsayle, by auctorite of persones, and by science: the whiche thre thinges ne ben not feeble by age, but certes they enforce and encrease day by day

and therfore shal ye hope this for a generall rule. First shalt ye call to your counsayle a fewe of your frendes that ben especial. For Salomon sayth, many frendes have thou, but amonge a thousande chose thre as be thy counsaylours: For al be it so that thou trust, ne tel thy counsayle but to a fewe, thou mayste afterwarde tel it to mo folke if it be nede. But loke alway that thy counsayleres have thoo condyciones that I have sayd before, that is to saye, that they be trewe, wyse, and of olde experience. And werke not alway in every nede by thyne counsayler alone: for sometyme behoueth it to be counsayled by many. For Salomon sayethe, saluacion of thinges is where as there be many counsayleres.

Nowe have I tolde you of which folke ye shal be counsailed: nowe wol I tel you whiche counsayle ye ought to eschue. First ye shall eschue the counsaylynge of fooles. Salomon sayth, take no counsayle of a foole, for he wol counsayle but after his owne lust and hys affection. The boke sayth, that the properte of a foole is this: he troweth lightly harme of every man, and lightly troweth al bountie in him selfe. Thou shalte eschue the counsayling of all flatterers, whiche ben enforced hem rather to prayse your person by flatterye, than for to tel you the soth fastnesse of thinges. Wherfore, Tullius sayth, amonge all the pestilence that ben in frendshyp, the greatest is flatterye. And therfore it is more nede þ thou eschue vtede flatterers, thā any other people. The boke sayth, thou shalt rather flee fro the swete wordes of flatering and prayeng, than fro the egre wordes of thy frendes that saith the sothes. Salomon sayth, that the wordes of a flaterer is a snare to catche innocēte. He sayth also, he that speketh to his frende wordes of flaterie & of pleasaunce, he setteth a net before hys fete to catche hym. And therfore Tullius sayth. Enclyne not thyn eeres to flatterers, ne take no counsayle of flatterers. And Caton sayth. Auyse the well, and eschue the wordes of swetenesse & of pleasaunce. And eke thou shalt eschue the counsayling of thin olde enemies that ben reconciled. The boke sayth, that no wight returneth safelye into þ grace of his olde enemye. And Ysope sayth, ne trust not to hem, to whiche thou hast sometime had werre or enemyte, ne tel hem not thy counsaile. And Seneck telleth the cause why it may not be, for he sayth, there as great fyre hath long

thyne enduren, that there dwelleth some va-
pour of here. And therfore saith Salomon,
in thyn olde foe truste thou neuer. For sykerly
though thin enemy be tecbcied, and make the
figne of humilite, & lout to the with his herd,
truste him neuer: for certes he maketh thilke
fayned humilite more for his profite then for
any humilite, or for anye loue of thy person,
bycause þ he demeth to haue victory ouer thy
persone by suche fayned countinaunce, the
which victorie he might not haue by strife or
werre. And Petrus Alphous sayth, make no
felowship with thyn old enemies, for if thou
do hem bounte, they wollen peruert it to wic-
kednesse. And eke thou must eschue the coun-
saylinge of hem that ben thy seruaunttes, and
beren the gret reuerence: for peraduenture they
sayn it more for drede than for loue. And ther
fore saith a philosopher in this wise. There is
no wight parfitly true to him that he dredeth
And Tullius saith, there is no might so great
of any emperour that longe may endure, but
he haue loue of the people and drede. Ye shall
eschue also the counsayling of folke that ben
dronkelewe, for they ne can no counsaile hyde.
For Salomō saith, ther nis no priuite ther as
reigneth dronkenesse. Ye shall haue also in sus-
pecte the counsayling of suche folke as coun-
sayle you one thing priuely, and coūsayle you
the contrarye openly. For Cassidorie sayethe,
þ it is a maner of sleight to hynder his enemy
when he sheweth to don a thyng openly, and
werketh priuely the contrarye. Thou shalte
haue also in suspecte the counsayling of wic-
ked folke, that be alwaye full of fraude. And
Dauid sayethe, that blissful is the man þ hath
not folowed the counsayling of shrewes.
Thou shalte also eschue the counsayllnge of
yonge folke, for her counsayling is not rype,
as Salomon sayethe.

¶ Nowe sir, sithens I haue shewed you of
suche folke as ye shal be counsayled of, and fo
lowe it: nowe wol I teche you howe ye shall
examine your counsayle. After the doctrine
of Tullius, in examininge of youre counsay-
lours, ye shal consider many thynges.

First thou shalte consider thilke thinge that
thou purposest, and vpon that thinge þ thou
wolte haue coūsaile, that very trueth be sayd
and cōstrued, this is to say, tel truely thy tale
for he that sayethe false, may not wel be coun-
sayled in that case, of whiche he lyeth. After
this thou shalte consider the thinges that a-
corden to that thou purposest for to do by thy
coūsaylours, if reason accorde therto, and eke
if thy might maye attayne thereto: and if the
more parte and the better parte of your coun-
saylours accorden therto or no. Than shalte
thou consider what thing shal folowe of her
counsaylinge: As hate, peace, werre, grate,
profyte, or domage, and many other thinges:
and in all thinges thou shalte chose the beste,
and weyue al other thiges. Than shalte thou
consider of what rote is engendred the mater
of thy counsayle, and what fruite it maye con-
ceyue and engender Thou shalte eke consider
al the causes, from whenche they be sprong.
And when thou hast examined thy counsayle,
as I haue sayde, and which party is the bet-
ter and more profytable, and haste approued
it by many wise folke & olde, than thou shalte
consider, if thou maiste performe it, and make
of it a good ende. For certes reason wol not
that any man shall begin a thinge, but yf he
might performe it as him ought: ne no wight
shoulde take vpon him to weye a charge, but
that he might bere it. For the proverbe sayth,
he that to muche embraceth distrayneth ysel.
And Caton sayth, assaye to do suche thinges
as thou hast power to done, leste the charge
oppresse the to sore, that the behoueth weyue
thing that thou haste begonne. And if so be
that thou be in dout, whether thou maist per-
fourme a thinge or none, chose rather for to
suffer than to begynne. And Peter Alphons
sayethe, if thou hast myght to do a thynge, of
whiche thou muste repente, it is better holde
thy tonge stylle than for to speke. Than maiste
thou vnderstonde by stronger reasons, that if
thou haste power to perfourme a werke, of
whiche thou shalt repent the, than is it better
thou suffre than begyn. Wel sayne they that
defenden euerye wight to assaye a thinge of
which he is in dout whether he may perfourme
it or none. And after when ye haue exami-
ned your co:nsayle (as I haue sayde before)
and knowe wel, that ye may perfourme youre
empryse: conferme it than sadly tyll it be at an
ende. ¶ Nowe it is reason and tyme that I
shewe you, whan and wherfore that ye may
chaunge your counsayle, withouten reproue.
Nothly a man may chaunge his purpose and
his counsayle, if the cause craseth, or whan a
newe case betydeth. For the lawe sayethe, that
vpon thinges that newely betideth, behoueth
newe counsayle. And Seneke sayth, yf thy

counsayle

counsaile is come to the eares of thin enemies, chaunge thy counsayle. Thou mayste also chaunge thy counsayle, if so be thou finde that by errour or by any other cause, harme or damage maye betyde. Also yf thy counsayle be dishonest, other els come of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy counsayle. For the lawe sayethe, that all bequestes that be dishonest, ne ben of no value: And eke, yf so be that it be impossyble it may not gladly be performed or kepte.

And take this for a generall rule, that every counsayle that is enfourmed so strongly, that it may not be chaunged for no condicion that may betyde, I say ỳ like counsayle is wicked.

Melibeus, when he had herd the doctryne of his wyfe dame Prudence, answerde in this wise. Dame (quod he) as yet hast thou taught me, as in generall sayenge, that I shall governe me in the chosing and in the withholdinge of my counsayle: But nowe wolde I faine that ye wold condiscende in especiall, how ỳ ye semeth by our counsayllours that we have chosen in this present nede.

Certayne (quod she) I beseche you in all humblesse, that ye wol not wylfully replye against my resons, ne displeye your herte though I speke thing that you displese, for god wot as to mine entent, I speke it as for youre beste and for youre honoure and profite eke, and forthy I hope that your benignite woll take it in pacience. And trusteth me well that your counsayle in this case ne sholde not as to speke properly be called a counsaillinge, but a mocion or a mouvinge of folye, in whiche counsayle ye have erred in many a sondrye wyse.

First ye have erred in ỳ assemblinge of your counsayllours: For first ye shulde have cleped a fewe folke to youre counsayle, and after ye might have shewed it to mo, if it had be nede. But ye have cleped to your counsayle a great multitude of people, full chargeous and full noyous for to here. Also ye have erred, for there as ye shoulde have onely cleped to your counsayle your trewe frendes, olde and wise, ye have cleped straunge folke, yonge folke, false flatterers, and enemyes reconsiled, and folke that done you reverence without lone. And eke ye have erred, for ye have brought hire you to your counsayle, ire, covertyse, and hastynesse, the whiche three thynges ben contrary to every good counsayle, honest & profytable, the whiche thre thynges ye have not distroyed neither in your selfe ne in your counsaylours, as ye ought. Ye have erred also for ye have shewed to your counsaillours your talent and your affections to make warre anon, and for to do vengeaunce, as they have espyde by your wordes, to what thinge ye be mevyd and therefore han they rather counsayled you to your talent, than to youre profyte. Ye han erred eke, for it semeth that you sufficeth to have be counsayled by these counsaylours onely, and with lytle avysement, where as in so hye and in so great a nede, it had ben necessarye mo counsaylours, and more delyberacyon to performe your empryse. Ye han erred also, for ye have not examyned your counsayle in the forsayd maters, ne in dew maner as the case requireth. Ye have erred also, for ye made no division betwene your trewe frendes & youre fayned counsaylours: ne ye have not knowen the wyll of your trewe counsayllours & frendes, olde, and wyse, but ye have cast all her wordes in an hochepot, & enclyned your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre of fooles than of wyse men. And eke for ỳ counsaylinges ỳ ben at congregacyons and multitudes of folke, there as men take more regarde to the nombre than to the sapience of persons, ye seme wel, that in such counsaylynges, fooles han the maystrye. Melibe answerde and said ayen: I graunte well that I have erred, but there as thou hast tolde me here byfore, that he nys not to blame that chaungeth his counsayle in certayne case, and for certayne and juste cause, I am all redye to chaunge my counsaylours eyghte as thou wolde well devyse. The proverbe sayethe, for to done synne is mannysshe, but certes for to persevere longe in synne, is werke of the dyvell.

To this sentence answereth anon dame Prudence & saide: Examyneth (qd she) well youre counsayle, and let us se whiche of hem hathe spoke moste resonably, and taughte you beste counsayle. And for as muche as ỳ examynacion is necessarye, lette us begyn at surgens and phisiciens, that first spake of this mater. I say that phisiciens and surgiens have said you in your counsayle discretly, as hem ought: and in her speche sayd full wisely, that to the office of hem apertayneth to done to everye wight honoure and profyte, and do wight to none, and after her crafte to don great diligence unto the cure of hem, whiche they have in her governaunce. And sir, right as they have

answerde

answerde wisely & discretly, right so rede I that they be hyely and soueraynly guerdoned for her noble speche, & true for they shal more drede ryght enemyste bethenke in the curacion of your doughter: for al be it so they ben your frendes, yet may shulden ye not suffre, that they serue you for nought, but ye ought thereafter guerdon hem, and pay hem her largesse. And as touching the proposicion, which the phisiciens entreteden in this cause, this is to sayne, that in maladies is, that cõtrarie is warished by an other contrarie: I wolde fayne knowe howe ye vnderstonde thilke text, and what is your sentence. Certes (qõ Melibeus) I vnderstond it in this wise. Right as they han do me a cõtrarie, so shulde I done hem an other, for right as they han benged hem vpon me, and done me wronge, right so woll I benge me vpon hem, and don hem wronge, and thus haue I cured one contrarye by an other.

Lo lo (qõ dame Prudence) howe lightly is euery man enclyned to his owne desyre & his owne pleasaunce. Certes (qõ she) the wordes of the phisiciens ne shulde not ben vnderstõd in that wise, for certes wickednesse is not contrarie to wickednesse, ne vengeaunce is not contrarie to vengeaũce, ne wronge to wrõge, but euery of hẽ enclyneth & engendreth other. But certes the wordes of the phisiciens shuld be vnderstonde in this wise, for good & wickednesse ben two contraries: and peace and werre, vengeaũce, & suffraũce, discord, & accord, and many other thinges: But certes wickednesse shalbe warished with goodnes, discorde by accorde, werre by peace, & so forthe in other thinges. And therto accordeth seynt Paule the apostel in many places: he sayth, ne yelde not harme for harme, ne wicked speche for wicked speche, but do wel to hem ꝑ don to ꝑ harme, & blesse them that sayth the harme. And in many other places he amonisheth peace & accord. But now woll I speke of the counsayle which was yeue vnto you by menne of lawe, and the wise folke, and olde folke, that sayden all by one accorde as ye herde before, that ouer al thinges ye shall done your diligence & bysyngrete to kepe your persone, and to warnestore your house: And they sayde also, that in this cause ye ought to werchen ful wisely and with grete deliberacion. And sir, as to the firste poynte, that toucheth the keping of your persone, ye shall vnderstõde that he ꝑ hath werre, shall euer mo sensuely & mekely prayen, byfore al thinges, that Jesu Christ of his mercy wol haue him in his protecciõ, and to be his soueyne helper at his nede: For certes in no wise there als no wight that may be counsayled and kepe sufficiently without the kepyng of our lorde Jesu Christe. To this sentence accordeth the prophet Dauid that sayth: If god ne kepe the cite, in ydel waketh he that it keepeth. Nowe sir, than shulde he commyt the keppyng of your person to your true frendes, that ben approued and yknowe, and of hem shulde ye aske helpe, your person to kepe. For Caton sayth: If thou haue nede of helpe aske it of thy frendes, for there nys none so good a phisicien as thy true frende. And after this than shal ye kepe you fro al straunge folke, & fro lyers, and haue alway in suspecte her companye. For Peter Alphons sayth. Ne take no company by ꝑ way of no straũge man, but if so be that thou haste knowen him of lenger tyme: And if so be that he fall in to thy companye, parauenture what soeuer thing he affirme & good wyll, enquire than as subtelly as thou canst of his conuersacion, and of his lyfe byfore, and fayne thy way, sayeng that woldest go thyder as thou wolte not go, and if he bere a spere, holde thy on the right syde of hym, and if he beare a swerde, holde thy on the lefte syde of hym. And than shall ye kepe you wisely from al maner of suche people as I haue said you here before, and hem and hir counsayle eschue. And after thys than shal ye kepe you, in suche maner, that for any presumpcion of your bodely strength, that ye lyste not ne acounte not the might of your aduersary so lyte, that ye let the kepyng of your person for your presumpcion, for euery wyse mã dredeth his enemy. And Salomon sayth: A very foole is he that of all hath drede: But certes he that throwe hardinesse of his herte and through the hardinesse of him selfe, hath to great presumpcion, him shall yuell betyde. Than shal ye euermore encounter wayte, ambusshementes, and all espiaille. For Vegecie sayethe: The wise man that dredeth harmes, eschueth harmes: he ne falleth in to no perylles, that peryll eschweth. And al be it so that thou seme, that thou be in seuere place, yet shalt thou alwaye haue diligence in kepyng of thy person, this is to say, ne be not negligent to kepe thyne owne person, not onely for the greatest enemy, but also for thy leste enemy. Seneke sayth, a man that is wel adusyed, he dredeth

dreth his ieste enemye. Of wyde saythe, that the ryed weed wol fler the great bulle & the white herte. And the prouerbe saythe, that a red thorne wol greue a lyng ful sore, and a red hounde wol holde the wylde boze. But nathelesse I say not thou shalt be so coward, that thou doute where as is no drede. The bible saythe, that some men haue great luste to fyghte, but yet they drede to be dyscomfited and kepe the fro the companye of shozners: for the bokes sayth, with shozners ne make no company, but flye her wordes as venym.

Nowe as to the seconde poynt, where as your wise counsaylours counsayled you to warnestore your house with great diligence, I wolde fayne knowe howe ye vnderstonde these wordes, and what is your sentence.

Melibeus answerde and sayd, certes I vnderstonde it in this wise, that I shall warnestore myne house with toures, suche as haue castels and other maner edifices, and armure and artelries, ber were which thinges I may my person and my house so kepe and defende that myne enemyes shullen be in drede myne house to aproche. To this sentence answerde dame Prudence. Warnishinge (qd she) of hye towres & of hye edifices, is with great costages and with great trauayle, and whan that they ben accomplished, yet ben they not worthe a strawe, but if they ben defended with trewe frendes, that ben olde and wyse. And vnderstonderh wel, that the greteste and the strongeste parties that riche men maye haue, as well to kepen her person as her goodes is, that they be beloued with her subiectes, and with her neyghbours. For thus saythe Tullius, that there is a maner garrison, that no man maye conquere ne discomfite, and that is a lorde to be beloued of his citezins, & of his people. Nowe sir, as to the thirde poynt, where as your olde and wise counsaylours sayd, that ye ought not sodaynly ne hastely proceede in this dede, but that ye oughten purueyen and apayre you in this case, with great diligence and deliberacion. Verrily I trowe that they sayd right trewly & right soth. For Tullius saith: In euery dede or thou begin it, apparayle the with great diligence. Than saye I, in vengeance takynge, in werre, in batayle, and in warnestoryng, or thou begyn I rede that thou apparayle the therto, and do it with great deliberacion. For Tullius saythe: The longe apparayling tofore the bataile, maketh short dispraye. And Cassiodorus saythe: The garryson is stronger, whan it is longe tyme auysed. But nowe let vs speke of the counsayle that was acorded by your neyghbours, suche as done you reuerence wythouten loue, your olde enemyes reconciled, your flatterers, that counsayled you certayne thinges priuely, and openly counsayled you the contrarye. The yonge folke also, that counsayled you to venge you, and to make werre anon. Certes sir, as I haue sayde byfore, ye haue greatly erred to clepe suche maner of folke to youre counsaile, whyche counsaylours ben ynough reproued by the resons aforesayd. But nathelesse let vs nowe discende to the speciall. Ye shul first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes the trouthe of this mater or of this counsaile, nedeth not diligently to enquire, for it is well wyste, whiche they ben that han don you this trespas and vilanye, and howe many trespasours, and in what maner they haue done all this wronge to you, and all this vyllany. And after this, than shull ye examyne the seconde condicion, which Tullius addeth in this mater. For Tullius putteth a thynge, which that he clepeth consentynge: thys is to saye, who ben they, and whiche ben they, and howe manye, that consenten to thy counsayle in thy wylfulnesse, to done hastye vengeaunce. And let vs consyder also who ben they, and howe manye they ben that consented to your aduersaryes. As to the first point, it is well knowen which folke they be, that consented to your hasty wilfulnesse. For treuly all tho that counsayle you to maken sodayne werre, ne be not your frendes. Let se nowe whyche ben they that ye holden so greatly your frendes, as to your person: For albeit so that ye be mighty & riche, certes ye bene but a lone: for trewlye ye ne haue no childe but a doughter, ne ye haue no brethren ne cosyns germayns, ne none other nye kynrede, wherfore your enemyes shulde stynte to pleede with you, ne to distroye your person. Ye knowe also that your richesse mote be dispended in diuerse parties. And whan that euerye wight hath his parte, they wollen take but ly tell regarde to venge youre dethe. But thyne enemies ben thre, & they haue many brethern, children, cosyns, & other nye kynred: & though so were, that thou haddest slayne of hem two or thre, yet dwelleth ther ynow to auenge her dethe, and to sle thy person. And though so be that your kinrede be more stedfaste and stiker than

thou the lyfe of your aduersaryes, yet nowre the lesse your power is not alwey certayne, for they ben not lyeth subiecte to you, and the lyfe of yous enemies ben nye lyeke to hem. And certes as in that, her condicion is better than is yours. Thus lette vs consider also of the counsaylinge of hem that counsayled you to take subayne vengeaunce, whether it accorde to reson or non: And certes ye knowe wel nay, for as by right and reson, there may no man take vengeaunce of no wight, but the iuge that hath iurisdiccion of it, when it is graunted him to take vengeaunce hastelye or attempretly as the lawe requireth. And yet more ouer of thilke woorde that Tullius sayeth seyenge, thou shalte consent, if that thy might and thy power maye consente and suffise to thy wylfulnesse, and to thy counsaillours: And certes thou mayste well saye naye, for sykerlye as for to speke properly, we may do nothing but suche thinge as we may done rightfully: and certes rightfully ye may take no vengeaunce, as of your owne proper auctorite. Than may ye se that your power ne consenteth not ne accorderh not with your wilfulnesse. Nowe let vs examine the thirde poynt, that Tullius sayeth consequence. Thou shalte vnderstonde that the vengeaunce that thou purposest for to take is consequent, and therof folowerh another vengeaunce, peryl, and werre, and other damages withouten numbre, of which we be not ware, as at this tyme. And as touchynge the fourthe poynte, þ Tullius sayeth engendring, thou shalte consider, that thys wrong, whiche that is don to the, is engendred of the hate of thyn enemies, and of the vengeaunce takyng vpon hem, that wolde engender a nother vengeaunce, and muchel sorowe & wastyng of rychesse, as I sayde ere. Nowe sir, as touchynge the fifte poynte, that Tully sayeth causes, whiche is the laste poynte, thou shalt vnderstonde, that the wronge that thou hast receyued hathe certayne causes, whiche that clerkes callen ofte, and sayen, and causa longinqua, and causa propinqua, that is to saye, the ferre cause, and the nyghe cause. The ferre cause is almighrye god, that is cause of al thinges. The nere cause is the thre enemies. The cause accidental was hate. The cause material, ben the fyue woundes of thy doughter. The cause formal, is the maner of their werkyng that brought ladders, and clombe in at thy windowes. The cause final was for to sle thy doughter, it letted not in so moche as in hem was. But for to speke of the ferre cause, as to what ende they shal come, or fynally what shall betyde of them in this caas, ne canne I not deme, but by conjecturyng and supposing: for we shall suppose that they shal come to a wicked ende, by cause that the boke of decrees saith. Seld or with grete payne, bene causes brought to a good ende, when they ben badly begon.

Nowe sir, if men wolde aske me why that god suffred men to do you this villany. Certes I can not wel answere, as for no soothe neither. For the Apostell sayethe, that the sayenges and the iudgementes of our lorde God mighty ben ful depe, there maye no man comprehende ne serche hem. Nathelesse by certaine presumpcions & conjectynges, I holde and beleue, that god whiche that is ful of sothfastnesse & of rightwisenesse, hath suffred thys wronge, by iuste cause resonable. ¶ Thy name is Melybee, thys is to say, a man that drynketh honey. Thou hast dronke so muche honey of swete temporel richesses, and delices of honours of this worlde, that thou arte dronke, and hast forgotten Jesu Christ thy creatour. Thou ne hast not done to him suche honour and reuerence as thee ought, ne thou ne hast not taken hede to the wordes of Ouide, that sayethe. Under the honye of the goodes of the body, is hid the venym that sleeth thy soule.

And Salomon saith: Yf it so be that thou hast founde honey, eete of the same honey, that that sufficeth: for yf so be that thou eete of þ same honey out of mesure, thou shalte spewe, and also be nedye and poore. And peraduenture almyghty god Jesu Christ, hath þ in his pyte, and hath rather away fro the yes sight, and his eeres of mysericorde and mercy. And also he hath suffred & giue leeue, þ thou shuldest be punished & chastised, in the maner that thou hast trespased and offended. Thou hast done synne agaynst our lorde Christ, for certes the thre enemyes of mankinde, that is to saye: the fleshe, the feende, and the worlde, thou hast suffred hem entre in to thyne herte wylfully, by the wyndowes of thy body, and hast not defended thy selfe sufficiently ayenst their assautes & their temptacions, so that they haue wounded thy soule in fyue places, this is to saye: The deedly synnes, that ben entred in to thy hert by thy fyue wyttes. And in þ same maner ourre lorde Christ hath wolde and suffred

sayd that thy three enemyes be entred into thy house by the wyndowes, and haue wounded thy daughter in the foresayd maner.

Truely (quod Melibee) I se wel that ye enforce you moche by wordes to ouercome me, in such maner that I shall not venge me on myn enemyes, shewyng me the perilles & the yeres that myght fall of this vengeaunce, but who so wolde consyder in all vengeaūces, the perils and yeres that myght ensue of vengeaūce takyng, a man wolde neuer take vengeaūce, and that were harme: for by the vengeaunce takyng, ben the wicked men distroyed fro the good men. And they that haue wyll to do wicked dedes, refrayn their wicked purpose, whan they se the punishyng & chastysing of the trespasours: And yet say I more, that right as a synguler person synneth in takynge vengeaunce of a nother man, right so synneth the iuge if he do no vengeaunce of hem that haue deserued. For Seneke sayth thus: That mayster he sayth is good, þ preueth thre wes. And as Catho dor saith: A man dredeth to do outrages, whā he wote and knoweth, that it displeseth to the iuges and souerayns. And another saith: The iuge that dredeth to do right maketh men thre wes. And saynt Poule the apostle sayth in his epistle, whan he writeth vnto the Romaines, that the iuges beare not the spere without cause, but they beare it to punish the thre wes & misdoers, and for to defende the good men. If ye wol than take vengeaunce of your enemyes, ye shul returne and haue your recourse to the iuge that hath the iurysdiction vpon hem, & he shall punysshe hem, as the lawe asketh and requireth.

A ha, sayd Melibee, this vengeaunce liketh me no thyng, I bethynke me nowe, and take hede how that fortune hath nourished me fro my childhode, and hath holpe me to passe many a stronge paas: Nowe I woll assaye her, trowyng with gods helpe, that she shall helpe me my shame for to auenge.

Truely sayd Prudence, if ye wol werke by my cōsayle, ye shall not assay fortune by no wayenge ye shall not leue or bowe vnto her, after the wordes of Seneck. For thinges that ben folysshly done, and that ben done in hope of fortune, shall neuer come to good ende. And as the same Seneke sayth: The more clere and the more shynyng that fortune is, the more hyre and the sooner broke she is. Trusteth nor in her, for she is not stedfast ne stable. For whan thou trowest to be most sure & stedfast of her helpe, she woll fayle and deceyue the. And where as ye saye, þ fortune hath nourysshed you fro your childhod, I say that in so moch ye shal þ lesse trust in her, & in her wytte. For Seneke sayth: Whan man that is nourysshed by fortune, she maketh him a great foole. Nowe than sith ye desyre and aske vengeaunce, and the vengeaunce that is done after the lawe, and before the iuge, ne lyketh you not, and the vengeaunce that is don in hope of fortune is perylous & vncertayne, than haue ye none other remedye, but for to haue your recourse vnto the souerayne iudge, that vengeth al vilanyes and wronges. And he shall venge you, after that hym selfe wytnesseth, where as he sayth: Leaue the vengeaunce to me, and I shall do it.

Melibe answerde, if I ne venge me of þ vilany that men haue don to me, I cōmon or warne hem, that haue done to me þ vylanye, and all other, to do me another vilanye. For it is writen: If thou take no vengeaunce of an olde vilany, thou cōmonest thyn aduersaryes to do the a newe vilany: And also for my sufferaūce men wolde do me so moch vilany, that I might neither here it ne sustayn it, & so shulde I be put & holden ouer lowe. For men sayn, in mykel suffring shal many thinges fal vnto the, which thou shalte not nowe suffre.

Certes (qō Prudēce) I graūt you, that ouer moche sufferaūce is not good, but yet ne foloweth it not therof, þ euery person, to whō men do vilanye, shulde take of it vengeaūce: for that appertayneth and longeth al only to iuges, for they shulde venge the vilanies and iniuries: And therefore those two auctorites that ye haue sayd afore, ben onely vnderstōde in the iuges: For whan they suffer ouer much the wronges & vilanyes to be done, without punyshment, they cōmonnot a man all onelye for to do newe wrōges, but they cōmaund it. Also a wyse man sayth, that the iuge that correcteth not the synner, cōmaundeth & byddeth him do synne. And the iuges and souerayns, might in their londe so muche suffre of þ thre wes & misdoers, that they shulde by soche sufferaunce, by processe of tyme, wexe of suche power & myght, that they shulde put out the iuges and the souerayns from their places, and at laste, make hem lese her lordshyppes.

But let vs nowe suppose, þ ye haue ben to

benge you: I saye ye be not of myght & power as nowe to benge you. for if ye wol make cõparison unto the myght of your aduersaries, ye shulde fynde in many thynges that I haue shewed you erst, that their cõdicion is better than yours, and therfore saye I, that it is good as nowe, that ye suffre and be patient.

Furthermore, ye knowe well that after the comen sawe, it is a wodnesse, a maner to stryue with a stronger or a more myghtye man than he is hym selfe, and for to stryue with a man of euen strength, that is to say, with as stronge a man as he is, it is peryll: and for to stryue with a weker man, it is folye, & therfore shulde a man flye stryuig as mikel as he might. For Salomon saythe: It is a great worshyp to a man to kepe hym fro noyse & stryfe: and yf it so befal & happe that a man of greater myght and strength than thou arte, do the greuaũce: studye & beseye the rather to stylle the same greuaunce, than for to benge the. For Seneche sayth, that he putteth him in great peryl, that stryueth with a greater man thã he is him selfe. And Caton sayth, if a man of higher astate or degre, or more mighty than thou, do the anoy or greuaũce, suffre him: for he that ones hath greued the, may an other tyme relieue the and helpe the. Yet sette I case ye haue lyerne for to benge you, I saye that there ben full many thinges, that shall restrayne you of vengeaunce takyng, and make you for to enclyne to suffre, and for to haue pacience in the wronges that haue bene done to you. First & formest yf ye woll consyder the fautes that ben in youre owne person, for whiche fautes god hath suffred you haue this tribulaciõ, as I haue said to you here before. For the poete sayth, that we ought paciently take the tribulations that come to vs, whan that we thynke & consyder that we haue deserued to haue thẽ. And saynt Gregorie saith, that whan a man considereth well the nombre of his defautes & of hys synnes, the paynes and the tribulations that he suffereth, seme the lesse vnto hym. And in as moche as him thinketh his synnes more heuy and greuous, in so moche semeth hys payne the lighter & the esyer vnto hym. Also ye owe to enclyne and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lorde Jesu Christ, as sayth saint Peter in his epystles. Jesu Christe he saythe hath suffred for vs, & yeuen ensample to euery man to folowe and se we him, for he dyd ne yet synne, ne neuer came there a vylayneus worde out of his mouth. Whan men cursed hym, he cursed hem not. And whan men beet him, he manaced hem not. Also the great patience, whiche saintes & hen in paradyse haue had in tribulacion & they haue suffred, without her desserte or gylt, ought moch lyere vs to pacience. Ferthermore, ye shall enforce you to haue pacience, consyderyng that the tribulacions of this worlde but lytell whyle endure, and sone passed hen and gon, and the loy that a man seketh to haue by patience in tribulacions is perdurable, after that & apostle saith in his Epistle. The loye of God he sayethe, is perdurable, that is to saye, euerlastyng. Also froward and byleurd herdasshye & he is nat well nourysshed and well taught, that can nat haue pacyence, or wyll not receyue pacyence. For Salomon sayethe, that the doctryne and the wyte of a man is knowen by pacyence. And in an other place he sayth, that he that is pacyent, gouerneth hym by great prudence.

And the same Salomon sayethe. The angry and lotorthfull man maketh noyses, and the pacyent man attempreth and stylleth hem. He sayethe also, it is more worth to be pacient than to be ryghte stronge. And he that may haue the lordshyp of his owne herte is more to prayse, than he that by his force or strength taketh great cytyes. And therfore saithe saint James the apostle, that pacience is a great vertue of perfection.

QVertes (qõ Melibee) I graũte you dame Prudence, that pacience is a great vertue of perfectiõ, but euery man may not haue the perfection that ye seke, ne I am not of the nombre of ryght parfyte men. For myn herte may neuer be in peace, vnto the tyme it be auenged. And al be it so that it was great peryll to myne enemyes to do me a vylanye, in takyng vengeaũce vpon me, yet take they no hede of the peryll, but fulfylled her wycked wyll and her corage: And therfore me thynketh mẽ ought not repryue me, though I put me in a lytel peryl, for to auẽge me, as though I dyd a great excesse, that is to saye: that I benge one outrage by an other.

Ah (qõ dame Prudence, ye say your wyll as you lyketh: But sawe ye not of the worlde a man shoulde not do outrage ne excesse for to benge him. For Casiodor sayth, that as yuell dothe he that bengeth him by outrage, as he that dothe the outrage. And therfore ye shall benge

venge you after the order of right, that is to say, by the lawe, and not by excesse ne by outrage. And also yf you wol venge you of your adversaries in other maner than right commaundeth, ye lyne. And therfore sayth Seneke: that a man shall neuer venge iniurie by iniurie. And yf ye say that right alloweth to defende violence by violence, and fyghting by fyghtyng: certes yf say soth, whan the defence is don without interual, or without tarryeng or delay, for to defend hym, and not for to venge him. And it behoueth that a man put suche attemperaūce in his defence, that men haue no cause ne mater to reprue him that defendeth him of outrage and excesse, for elis were it agayne reason. Parde ye knowe well, that ye make no defence as now, for to defende you, but for to venge you: and to shewen it that ye haue no will to do your dede attemperatly, and therfore me thynketh that pacience is good. For Salomon saithe, that he that is not pacyent shal haue gret harme.

CErtes sayd Melibee I graūt you, that whan a man is impacient and wrothe of that that toucheth him not, and that appertayneth not vnto him, thoughe it harme hym it is no wonder. For the lawe sayethe, that he is coulpable, that entremetteth or medleth with suche thinges as apertayneth not vnto hym. And Salomō saith, that he that entremetteth of the noise or strife of another man, is lyke to him that taketh a straūge houde by the eres: for right as he, that taketh a straunge houde by the eres, is other while bytten by the houd, right so in the same wyse it is reason that he haue harme that by his impacyence medleth him of the noyse of an other man, where as it appertayneth not vnto hym. But ye knowe wel that this dede, that is to say my grefe and my disese, toucheth me right nyghe. And therfore though I be wrothe and impacient, it is no merueyle: and sauynge youre grace I can not se that it might greatly harm me, though I toke vengeaunce, for I am richer and more myghty thā myn enemyes be: And wel knowe ye that by money and by hauynge great possessyons, bene all thynges of this worlde gouerned. And Salomon sayth, all these thynges obey to money.

Whan Prudence had herde her husbonde maunte hym of his richesse and his moneye, dispraysing the power of his aduersaries, she spake and sayd in this wyse. Certes dere sir, I graunte you that ye be ryche and myghty, and that richesse is good to hem that haue wel gotten hem, and that well can vse them. For right as the body of a man may not lyue without the soule, no more may it lyue without the temporel goodes, and by richesse may a man get hym greate frendes. And therefore sayth Pamphilius: If a nerthes doughter be rych, she may chese of a thousande men, whiche she wol take to her husbond: for of a thousande, one wol not forsake her ne refuse her. And this Pamphilius sayethe also: If thou be right happy, that is to say, if thou be riche, thou shalte fynde a great nombre of felowes & frendes. And if thy fortune chaūge, farewel frendshyp & felowshyp, for thou shalt be alone without anye companye, but yf it be the companye of poore folke. And yet sayth this Pamphilius more ouer, that they that bē bonde and thrall of lynage, shal be made worthy and noble by the rychesses. And right so as by the richesses there come many goodnesses, right so by pouerty come there many harmes and yuels, for greate pouerrye constrayneth a man to do many yuels. And therfore calleth Cassiodor pouertie the mother of ruine, that is to say, the mother of ouerthrowing or of fallyng downe. And therefore sayth Peter Alfonce: One of the greatest aduersyties of this worlde is whan a fre man by kynde or of byrth, is cōstrayned by pouerty to eete the almesse of his enemye. And the same saithe Innocent in one of his bokes: he sayth, that sorowfull and misshappe is the condicion of a poore begger, for yf he aske not his meate, he dyeth for hunger, and yf he aske, he dyeth for shame: and algates necessite cōstrayneth hym to aske. And therfore sayethe Salomon, that better is to dye, than for to haue such pouerte And as the same Salomō saieth: Better it is to dye of bytter dethe, than for to lyue in such wyse. By these resons that I haue sayd vnto you, & by many other resons that I coulde say, I graunte you that richesses ben good, to hem that hem well getten, and to hem that wel vsen tho richesses: And therfore woll I shewe you how ye shal behaue you in gatheryng of richesses, & in what maner ye shullen vse hem.

First ye shal get hem without great desyre, by good leyser, sokingly and not ouer hastely, for a man that is to desyrying to gette richesse, habandoneth him first to theft and to al other

yuels And therfore saith Salomon: He that hasteth him to bestly to wexe riche, he shal be not innocent. He saith also, that the ryches that hastely cometh to a man, sone and lightly goth a passeth from a man, but that richesse that cometh lytel & lytel, wexeth alwaye and multiplyeth. And sir, ye shall gette ryches by your wytte and by your trauayle, vnto your profyte, and that wythout wronge or harme doyng to anye other persone. For the lawe saythe, there maketh no man hym selfe riche, yf he do harme to an other wyght, thys is to say: that nature defendeth and forbydeth by right, that no man make hym selfe riche vnto the harme of a nother persone. And Tullius sayth, that no sorowe ne no drede of dethe, ne nothyng ꝑ maye fall vnto a man, is so moche ayenst nature, as a man to encrease his owne profyte, to the harme of an other man. And though the great and myghtye men, gette richesses more lyghtly than thou, yet shalt thou not be idel ne slowe to do thy profite, for thou shalt in al wyse flye idelnesse. For Salomon sayth, that idelnesse techeth a man to do many yuels. And the same Salomon sayth, that he that trauayleth and besyeth hym to tylthe his londe, shall eate breed: but he that is ydell and calleth him to no besynesse ne occupacyon, shall fall in to pouerte & dye for hunger. And he that is idell & slowe, can neuer fynde conenable tyme for to do his profyte. For there is a berstfyer sayth, that the ydel man excuseth him in wynter, bycause of the great colde, and in sommer bycause of the heete. For these causes sayth Caton, waketh and enclyne you not ouer moche for to slepe, for ouer moche reste nourysheth and causeth manye byces. And therfore saith saynt Jerom, do some good dedes, that the dyuel which is our enemy, ne fynde you not vnoccupyed, for the dyuel ne taketh not lyghtly vnto his werking such as he fyndeth occupyed in good werkes.

Than thus, in getting richesses ye muste flye idelnesse. And afterwarde ye shall vse the richesses, which ye haue gote by your wyte and by your trauayle, in suche maner, that men holde you not to scarce ne to sparyng, ne sole large, that is to say, ouer large a spender: for right as menne blame an auaricyous man by cause of his scarcite & chynchery, in the same wise is he to blame that spendeth ouer largely And therfore saith Caton: Vse (sayth he) the richesses that thou hast gotte in such maner, that men may haue no mater ne cause to cal the nother wrecche ne chynch: For it is grete shame to a man to haue a poore herte and a ryche purse. He sayth also, the goodes that thou hast gote, vse them by mesure, that is to say, spende mesurably, for they that folysshly waste and dispende the goodes that they haue, whan they haue no more propre of her owne, than they shape hem to take the goodes of an other man. I say than that ye shall flye auarice, vsyng your richesse in suche maner, that men saye not that your richesses ben buryed, but that ye haue hem in your might & in your weldyng. For a wyse man repreueth the auaricyous man, and sayth thus in thys verses two. Wherto and why burieth a man his goodes by hys great auarice, and knowerth well that nedes he muste dye, for dethe is the ende of euery man, as in this presente lyfe. And for what cause or enchesou loueth he hym, or hurteth he him so fast vnto hys goodes, that all his wyttes mowe not diserue him, ne departe him fro hys goodes, and knoweth wel, or ought to know, ꝑ whan he is dede, he shal no thynge beare with him out of this world. And therfore sayth saynt Augustyn, that the auaricyous man is lykened vnto hell, that the more it swalowerth, ꝑ more desyre it hath to swalowe and deuoure. And as well as ye wolde eschue to be called an auaricious man or chynche, as well shoulde ye kepe and gouerne you in suche a wyse, that men call you not foole large. Therefore sayth Tullius, The goodes of thyne house ne shoulde not be hydde ne kepte so close, but that they myght be opened by pyte and debonayre, that is to saye, to yeue hem parte that haue grete nede. Ne thy goodes shuld not be so open, to be euery mans goodes. Afterwarde in getting of youre richesses and in dyuyng hem, ye shall alway haue fyue thynges in your herte, that is to say, our lorde god, cõscience, & good name. First ye shall haue god in youre herte, and for no richesse ye shuld do any thyng, which may in any maner displese god your creatour and maker. For after the worde of Salomon, it is better to haue a lytel good with the loue of god, than to haue moche good and treasour, and lese the loue of his lorde God. And the prophete saithe, that better it is to be a good man, and haue lytell good & treasour, than to be holden a shrewe, and haue greate richesse. And yet I saye ferthermore, that ye shulde alway

haue do your besyneſſe to get you richeſſes, ſo that ye get hem with good conſcyence. And the apoſtle ſaith, that there nys thyng in thys worlde, of whiche we ſhoulde haue ſo great ioy, as whan oure conſcience berryth vs good witneſſe. And the wyſe man ſaith: ỹ the ſubſtaunce of a man is full good, whan fame is not in mans conſcience. Afterwarde in getynge of youre richeſſes and in vſyng of hem, ye muſt haue great beſyneſſe and great dylygence, that your good name be alwaye kepte and conſerued. For Salomon ſaythe, that better it is, & more it auayleth a man to haue a good name, than for to haue manye ryches: And therfore he ſaythe in an other place. Do great dilygence ſaithe Salomon, in kepynge of thy frendes and of thy good name, for it ſhal lęger abyde wyth the than any treſour, be it neuer ſo precyous. And certes he ſhulde not be called a great gentyleman, that after god & good conſcience, al thynges lefte, ne dothe his dylygence & beſineſſe to kepe his good name. And Caſſyodor ſaythe, that it is a ſygne of a gentyll herte, whan a man louyth and deſyreth to haue a good name. And therfore ſaith ſaint Auguſtyn, that there bene two thynges that ben ryght neceſſary & alſo nedefull: and that is good conſcience, & good loſe, that is to ſaye: good conſcience to thyne owne perſon inwarde, and good loſe for thy neyghbour outwarde. And he that truſteth hym ſo moche in hys good conſcyence, that he diſpyſeth & ſetteth at nought hys good name or loſe, and recketh not thoughe he kepe not hys good name, nys but a cruel churle.

Lo ſir nowe haue I ſhewed you howe ye ſhuld do in gettyng richeſſes, & howe ye ſhulde vſe hem: and I ſe wel that for ỹ truſt that ye haue in your richeſſes, ye wol moue werre and batayle. I coũſayle you that ye begyn no werre in truſt of youre richeſſes, for they ne ſuffyſe not werres to maintayne. And therfore ſayth a philoſopher: That man that deſyreth and wolde algates haue werre, ſhall neuer haue ſuffiſaũce: for the richer that he is, ỹ greater diſpences muſt he make, yf he wol haue worſhyp & victorie. And Salomon ſaith, that the greater richeſſes that a man hath, ỹ more dyſpendours he hath. And therfore ſir, al be it ſo that for your riches ye may haue moch folke, yet behoueth it not, ne it is not good to begin werre, where as ye may in other maner haue peace, vnto youre worſhyp & profyte: for the victorye of batayls ỹ ben in this worlde, lieth not in great nombre or multytude of people, ne in the vertue of man, but it lyeth in the wyl and in the honde of our lorde God almyghty. And therfore Judas Machabee, which was goddes knight, whan he ſhulde fyght againſt his aduerſari, that had a greater nomber and a greater multytude of folke, & ſtronger than was his people of Machabe, yet he recomforted his lytel company, and ſayd right in thys wyſe: Alſo lyghtly ſayd he, may our lord god almyghty yeue victorye to a fewe folke, as to many folke, for the victorye of a batayle commeth not by the great nombre of people, but it cometh from our lorde god of heauen. And dere ſir, for as moche as there is no man certayne, if it be worthy ỹ god yeue him victorie or not, after that Salomon ſayth, therfore euery man ſhuld gretly drede werres to begin: and bycauſe that in batayles fall manye perils, and happeth other while, that as ſone is the great man ſlayne as the lytell man. And as it is wryten in the ſecond boke of kinges: The dedes of batayles ben auenturous & nothyng certayn, for as lightly is one hurt with a ſpeere as an other: And for ther is great peryll in werre, therfore ſhoulde a man flye and eſchue werre in as muche as a mã may goodly. For Salomon ſayth, he that loueth peryll, ſhall fall in peryll.

After that dame Prudence had ſpoken in this maner, Melibe anſwerd and ſayd. I ſe well dame Prudẽce, that by your fayre wordes and your reſons that ye haue ſhewed me, that ỹ werre lyketh you nothing, but I haue not yet herde your counſayle howe I ſhall do in this nede.

Certes (ſaid ſhe) I coũſaile you that ye accorde with your aduerſaries, & that ye haue peace with hem. For ſayne James ſaythe in his Epiſtell: that by concorde and peace ſmal riches wexe great: and by debate & diſcorde riches decay And ye knowe well, that one of the greateſt & moſte ſoueraine thynge ỹ is in this world, is vnite and peace. And therefore ſaith our lord Jeſu Chriſt to his apoſtles, in this wyſe: wel happy ben they, that loue and purchaſe peace, for they be called ỹ children of god. Ah, ſayd Melibe, nowe ſe I wel, that ye loue not myne honoure ne my worſhyppe. Ye knowe well that myn aduerſaris haue begon this debate & brige by their outrage. And ye ſe well ỹ they ne require ne pray me of peace,

ne they ware not to be reconciled. Will ye this thing I counsaile me, & obey me to him, & crye him mercy, & confesse that ye have not my wordes layde, for I ghe no more for, ouer gyuen hastely ouermuch & diligently, so sharply is he to greue, humilite of me haue he.

¶ And he gan haue goodenes to make semblaunt of wrath, & sayd: Certes sir, sauf your grace, I loue your honour & profyte as I do myne owne, & euer haue do: ye ne none other desire in the contrarye. And yet, if I had sayd, that ye shulde haue purchased peace & reconciliation, I ne had mocke misstaken me, ne sayde amysse. For the wyse man sayeth: the beginning of warre is manifest by another man, & the reconciling beginneth by the selfe. And the prophete sayth: Eschewe thou vnthewfulnesse, and do goodnes, seke peace & follow it, in as much as to the is. Yet say I not, that ye shuld rather pursue to your aduersaries for peace, than they shulde to you: For I know well that ye ben so hard herted, that ye wol do nothing for me. And Salomon sayth: he that hath ouer hard an herte, he at last shall myshappe or misdriue.

When Melibe had herd dame Prudence make semblaunt of wrath, he said in this wise. Dame I praye you, that ye be not displeased of thing that I say, for ye knowe well that I am angry & wrothe, and that is no wonder: & they that ben wroth, wot not well what they do, ne what they saye. Therfore the prophete saith: Trouble eyen haue no clere sight. But saye and counsaile me as you lyketh, for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre: And if ye reprue me of my folye, I am the more holden to loue and praise you. For Salomon sayth, that he that reproueth him y doth folye, he shal fynde greater grace than he that discreueth him by swete wordes.

Than sayde dame Prudence, I make no semblaunt of wrath ne of anger, but for your great profit, for Salomon saith: he is more worth, that reproueth or chydeth a fole for his folye, shewing him semblaunt of wrathe, than he that flatereth him and prayseth hi in his misdoing, and laugheth at his folye. And this same Salomon sayth afterwarde: That by y sorowful visage of a man, that is to say, by the sadde & heuy countenaunce of a man, the fole amendeth and amendeth him selfe.

Than said Melibe, I shall not come amongs hard so manye fayre treasons as ye put to me and shewe: for shortly your wyl & your counsaile, and I am al redy to performe and fulfille. ¶ Then dame Prudence discouered all her wyl, entierly, and sayde. I counsayle you (said she) aboue all thinges, that ye make peace betwene god and you, and be reconsyled vnto hym and to his grace, for as I haue sayde you here before, God hath suffred you to haue this tribulacion & diseise for your synne: and if ye do as I saye you, God will sende your aduersaries vnto you, and make hem fall at your feet, redy to do your wyl and your commaundement. For Salomon sayth, whan the condycion of man is pleasaunt and lyking to god, he chaungeth the hertes of the mans aduersaries, and constrayneth hem to beseche him of peace & of grace. And I praye you let me speke with your aduersaries priuely, for they shall not knowe that is be of your wyl or your assent: And then whan I knowe their will and their entent, I may counsaile you the more surely.

Dame sayde Melibe, doth your wyl and your liking, for I put me holly in your disposicion and ordynaunce.

Than dame Prudence, when she sawe the good wyll of her husbonde, delyuered & rose aduise in her selfe, thynking howe she might bring this mede vnto a good conclusyon and to a good ende: And when she sawe her time, she sente for these aduersaryes to come vnto her in a priue place. And she wel wysely vnto hem the greate goodes that come of peace, & the great harmes & perylis that ben in warre, and sayd to hem in a goodly maner: how that hem ought haue great repentaunce of the iniury and wrong, that they had done to Melibeus her lorde, & vnto her & to her doughter.

And when they herd the goodlye wordes of dame Prudence, they were so ouprised & rauished, and had so great ioye of her, that wonder was to tell. ¶ Ah, lady (sayde they) ye haue shewed vnto vs the blyssynge of swetnesse after the saying of Dauid the prophet. For reconsiling which we be not worthy to haue in no maner. But we oughte require it with great contricion and humilite, that ye of your goodnesse haue presented vnto vs. Nowe is we wel, that the science and cunynge of Salomon is full trewe, for he sayth: That swete wordes multiply & encrease frendes, and maketh shrewes to be debonaire and meke.

Certes (said they) we put our dede and all our

our mater & cause, al holly in your good wyl, and been redy to obey at the cõmaundement of our lorde Melibeus. And therfore beth a benigne lady: we praye and beseche you, as mekely as we can and maye, that it lyke you to your great goodnesse, to fulfyl your goodly wordes. For we confesse and knowe, that we have offended and greved our lorde Melibeus out of measure: so forforthe þ we be out of power to make hym amendes. And therfore we oblige & binde us & our frendes, for to do all at hys wyl and commaundement: but parauenture he hath suche hevynesse, and suche wrath to vs warde, bycause of our offence, that he wol enioyne vs such a payne, as we may not beare ne sustayne, And therfore noble lady, we beseche your womanly pite, to take suche aduisement in this nede, that we & our frendes be not destroyed ne distroyed, through our folye.

Certes sayd Prudẽce it is an harde thing and right perilous, that a man put him al holly in arbytracion & iudgement, and in the might & power of his enemie: For Salomon sayth: leuer than me, & reweth rather me to þ I shal say: Ne reweth neuer þ power ne gouernaunce of thy goodes, to thy son, to thy wyfe, to thy frende, ne to thy brother: ne yeue thou neuer might ne mastry ouer thy body while thou lyuest. Nowe, sith he defendeth þ a man shulde not yeue to his brother ne to his frende, the might of his body. By a strõger reason he defendeth & forbideth a man to yeue him selfe to his enemye. And natheless I counsayle you þ ye mistrust not my lorde: for I wote wel and knowe verely, that he is debonaire & meke, large, curteis, and nothing desirous ne coueitous of goodes ne riches. For there is nothinge in this worlde þ he desireth, saue only worshyp and honoure. Furthermore I knowe, and am right sure, þ he shal nothinge do in this nede, without my counsaile: and I shal so werke in this case, that by the grace of oure lorde god, ye shal be reconsiled vnto vs.

Than sayd they with one voyce, worshypful lady we put vs and our goodes all fully in your wyl and disposicion, and been redy to come, what daye that it liketh vnto your noblesse to limite vs or assyne vs for to make our obligacion & bonde, as strong as it lyketh vnto your goodnesse, that we may ful fyl the wyl of you & of my lorde Melibe.

When dame Prudẽce had herd the answere of these men, she bad hem go ayen priuely, & she returned to hir lorde Melibe, & tolde him how she foude his aduersaries ful repentaũt knowlegyng ful lowly her synnes & trespas, and how they were redy to suffer al payne, requiring & prayeng him of mercy and pyte. Than sayd Melibe, yt is wel worthy to have pardone & forgyuenesse of hys synne, that excuseth not his synne, but knowlegeth and repenteth him, after yt dulgẽce. For Seneke sayth, there is the remission and forgyuenesse, where as the confessions: for confession is neighbour to innocence. And therefore I assent and confirme me to haue peace, but it is good that we do nought but without the assent and wyl of our frendes.

Than was Prudẽce right gladde and ioyful, and sayde: Certes sir, ye haue well and goodly answerde: for right as by the counsayle, assent, and helpe of your frendes, ye haue be stered to venge you and make werre: Right so, without her counsayle shall ye not accorde you, ne haue peace with your aduersaries. For the laws sayth: there is nothyng so good, by way of kinde, as a thynge to be vnbounde by him that it was vbounde.

Than dame Prudence, without delay or tarying, sente anone her messanger, for her kynsfolke and her olde frendes, whiche that were trewe and wise: and tolde hem by order, in the presence of Melibe, al þ mater, as it is afore expressed and declared. And prayd hem that they would say their aduise and counsayle, what best were to do in this nede. And when Meliboeus frendes had taken her aduyse and deliberation al the forsayd mater, & had examyned it by greate besynesse and diligence. They yaue full counsayle for to haue peace & rest, & that Melibe shulde receyue with good hert his aduersaries, to forgyuenesse & mercy.

And when dame Prudence hath herde that assent of her lorde Melibe, and the counsaile of his frendes accorde with her wyl and her entencion, she was wonderly glad in her hert, and sayd. There is an olde prouerbe (sayth she) That the goodnesse that thou mayste do this day, do it, and abide it not ne delay it not til the next daye. And therfore I counsayle, that ye sende your messegers, such as be discrete and wise, vnto your aduersaries: telling hem on your behalfe, that if they wol entre of peace and accorde, that they shape hem without delay or tarying, to come vnto vs: whyche

the thyng perfourned was in dede. And when their trespassours, and repenting folke of her folyes, that is to say, the aduersaries of Melibeus, had herde what their messengers said vnto hem, they were right glad and ioyful, and answerde ful meketly and benignely, yelding grace and thankes to her lorde Melibee, and to al his compayne: and hope hem without delaye to go with the messengers, and obeyed the commaundement of her lorde Melibeus. And right anone they toke her way to the court of Melibe, and toke with hem some of their true frendes, to make fayth for hem, and for to be her borowes: And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibe, he said to hem these wordes. It stondeth thus, sayd Melibe, and sothe it is, that causeles & without skyll and reason, ye haue done great iniuries and wronges to me and my wyfe Prudence, and to my doughter also, for ye haue entred in to my house by violence, and haue don suche outrage, that all men knowe well that ye haue deserued dethe. And therfore will I knowe and wete of you, whether ye will put the punishinge and the chastysinge & the vengeaunce of this outrage, in the wyl of me and of my wyfe, or ye wol not.

Then the wisest of hem thre answerde for hem al, and sayd. Sir (said he) we knowe wel that we ben vnworthy to come to the courte of so great a lorde and so worthy as ye be, for we haue so greatly mistaken vs, and haue offended and agylted in such wise ag ayne your high lordeship, that truely we haue deserued the dethe, but yet for the great goodnesse & debonairte, that al the world witnesseth of your person, we submitte vs to the excellence and benignite of your gracious lordeship, & ben redy to obey to al your commaundementes, beseching you, that of youre mercyable pite ye will consider our great repentaunce, & lowe submission, & graunte vs forgyuenesse of our outragious trespasse and offence: For wel we knowe, that your lyberall grace and mercye stretche further into the goodnesse, than don our outragious giltes and trespasses into the wickednesse. Al be it þ curssedly & dampnably we haue agylted ageynst your high lordship.

Than Melibee tooke hem vp fro the ground full benignely, and receyued her obligacions and her bondes by her othes vpon her pledges and borowes, and assyned hem a certayne day to returne vnto his court for to receyue and accept sentence and iudgement þ Melibeus wold comaunde to be don on hem, by þ causes aforsaid, whiche thinges ordayned, euery man returned to his house.

And when dame Prudence sawe her tyme, she saued & asked her lorde Melibe, what vengeaunce he thought take on his aduersaries.

To whiche Melibe answerde, & said: Certes (sayd he), I thinke and purpose me fully to disherite hem of al that euer they haue, and for to put them in exile for euer.

Certes said dame Prudence, this were a cruell sentence, and muche ayenst reason. For ye be riche ynoughe, and haue no nede of other mennes riches. And ye might lightly in this wise gete you a coueitous name, whiche is a vicious thing, and ought be eschewed of euery good man. For after the sayenge of þ apostel. Coueitise is rote of al harmes. And therfore it were better to you lese so muche good of your owne, than for to take of their good in this maner. For better it is to lese good with worshyp, than to wyn good with vylanye and shame. And euery man ought to do his diligence and his busynesse, to gete him a good name. And yet shal he not only busy hym in keping his good name, but he shal also enforce him alwaye to do some thinge, by which he may renewe hys good name. For it is written, that the old good lose of a man or good name, is soone gon and paste, whan it is not renewed. And as touchynge, that ye say that ye will exile your aduersaries: that thynketh me muche ayenst reason, and out of measure, considryng the power, that they haue yeue you vpon them selfe. And it is written: þ he is worthy to lose his priuylege, that misuseth the might and power that is giuen hym. And I sette case, ye might enioyne hem that payne by right & lawe, whiche I trowe ye may not do: I saye, ye might not put it to execution, for peraventure than it were lyke to turne to the werre, as it was before. And therfore if ye wol that men do you obeisaunce, ye must deuocan you more courteisly, that is to say: ye must yeue more easy sentences and iugement. For it is written: he that most curteisly commaundeth, to him men moost obey. And therfore I pray you, that in thys neces-site and in this nede, ye caste ye to ouercome your hert. For as Seneca sayth: he that ouercometh his hert, ouercometh twise. And Tully sayth: there is nothing so cõmendable in a great

great lorde, as when he is debonaire & meke,
and apeteyneth lighely. And I pray you that
ye wol nowe forbere to do vengeaunce, insu-
che a maner, that youre good name maye be
kept and conserued, and that men may haue
cause & matere to prayse you of ryte & mercy:
and ȳ ye haue no cause to repente you of thige
that is done. For Senec sayeth: he ouercō-
meth in an yuell maniere, that repenteth hym
of his victorye. Wherfore I pray you, let mer-
cy be in youre hert, to theffecte and entent, that
god almighte haue mercye vpon you in hys
last iugement. For saint James sayeth in his
Epistell: iugement without mercy shall be do
to him, that hath no mercy of another wight.

Whan Melibe had herde the great skylles
and reasons of dame Prudence, and her wise
informacions and teachinges, his hert gan en
cline to the will of his wife: consyderinge her
trewe entent, confirmed him anon and assen-
ted fully to worke after her cōsayle: & thank
ed god, of whom procedeth al goodnesse and
vertue, that him had sent a wife of so greate
discrecion. And whan the day came that hys
aduersaries shulde apeare in his presence, he
spake to hem goodly, and sayde in this wise.

Al be it so, that of your pride and high pre-
sumpcion and folye, and of your negligence &
vnconninge, ye haue misborne you, and tres-
pased vnto me, yet for as mikell as I se and
beholde your greate humilyte, and that ye be
sory and repentaūt of your gyltes, it cōstray-
eth me to do you grace & mercy: wherfore I
receyue you to my grace, & forgyue you hol-
ly al the offences, iniuries, and wronges, that
ye haue don ayenst me and myne, to theffecte
and ende, that god of his endelesse mercy woll
at the tyme of our dienge forgyue vs our gyl-
tes, that we haue trespased to hi in this wre-
ched worlde. For doutelesse if we be sory and
repentaunt for the sinnes and gyltes, whiche
we haue trespased in ȳ sight of our lord god:
he is so fre and so merciable, that he wol for-
gyue vs our gyltes, and bring vs to the blisse
that neuer shal haue ende. AMEN.

Here endeth the tale of Chaucer,
and here folowerh the Mon-
kes prologue.

Whan ended was the tale of
Melibee
And of prudence, and her
benignyte
Our host sayde, as I am
faythful man
And by the precious corps Madrian
I had leuer than a barel of ale
That goodlefe my wyfe had herde this tale
For she nothing is of suche patience
As was this Melibeus wyfe Prudence
By goddes bones, when I dere my knaues
She bringeth me the great clubbed staues
And crieth, slee the dogges euerychone
And breke bothe backe and euery bone
And if that any neighbour of myne
Wol not in churche to my wife enclyne
Or be sohardy, to her to trespace
Wha she cometh home, she rampeth i my face
And crieth false cowarde wreke thy wyfe
By corpus domini, I wol haue thy knyfe
And thou shalt haue my distaf, and go spinne
Fro day tyl nyght, she wol thus beginne.
Alas she sayth, that euer she was shape
To wedde a mylksop, a cowarde ape
That wol be ouerlyde with euery wight
Thou darst not stonde by thy wiues right
This is my lyfe, but if that I wol fight
And out at doze, anon I mote me dight
And eis I am lofte, but yf that I
Be lyke a wylde lyon, fole hardy
I wot wel she wol do me slee some day
Some neighbour, and than go my way
For I am perylous with knyfe in honde
Al be it that I dare not her withstonde
For she is bigge in armes by my fayth
That shal he finde, that her misdoth or saith
But let vs passe away from this matere.
Quod he, my lorde be saide, sir mōke: be mery of che
For ye shal tell vs a tale trewely (re
Lo Rochester stondeth here fast by
Ride forth min own lord, breke not our game
But by my trouth I knowe not your name
Wheder I shal cal you my lorde dan John
Or dan Thomas, dan Robert, or dan Alon
Or of what house be ye, by your father kyn
I vowe to god, thou hast a ful fayre chyn
It is a gentle pasture ther thou gost
Thou art not lyke a pynaunt or a ghost
Upon my fayth thou arte some officere
Some worthy Sexten, or some Celerere
For by my fathers soule, as to my dome
Thou art a maister, when thou art at home

No

No poore clopperer, ne no pleye nobyle
But a gouernour wyse and wyle
And therwith of byrthe and of bones
A wel faring person for the nones
I praye to god yeue him confusion
That first me brought in to religion
Thou wouldest be a frere foule fright
Haddest thou as great leue, as I haue might
To perfourme al thy lust in engendrure
Thou haddest begoten many a creature
Alas, why werest thou so wyde a cope
God yeue me sorowe, and I were pope
Not onely thou, but euery myghty man
Though he were shore hye vpon his pan
Shulde haue a wife, for al this world is lorn
Religion hath take vp al the corne
Of tredyng, and bere men ben shrimpes
Of feble trees therr cometh wretched impes
This maketh that our heires be so slender
And feble, that they may not wel engender
This maketh that our wiues wol assay
Religious folke, for they may better pay
Of Venus paymentes, than mowe we
God wote no lustheburghs paye ye
But be not wroth my lorde, though I play
Ful ofte in game a sothe haue I herde say.
This worthy monke toke al in patience
And said, I wol do my diligence
As ferre as sownerth in to honestie
To tell you a tale, ye two or thre
And if ye lyste to herken hytherwarde
I wol you sayne, the lyfe of saint Edwarde
Or elis tragidies first I wol tell
Of which I haue an hundred in my cell.
Tragydy is to tel a certayne storye
As olde bokes maken memorye
Of hem that stode in great prosperite
And be fallen out of hye degre
In to misery, and ended wretchedly
And they ben versified comenly
Of syxe fete, whiche men cal exametron
In prose eke ben endited many on
And in metre, many a londrye wyse
Lo, this ought ynoughe to suffyse
Nowe herkeneth, if you lyste for to here
But first I beseche you in this matere
Though I by order tel not these thynges
Be it of Popes, Emperours, or kynges
After her ages, as men wryten fynde
But tellen hem some before & some behynde
As it cometh nowe to my remembraunce
Haue me excused of myne ignoraunce.

Here endeth the Monkes prologue, and here begynneth hys tale.

Tyll bewayle in manner of tragedy
The harme of hem that stoden in hye degre
And fyll, so that therne no remedy
To bryng hem out of her aduersite
For certayne, whan that fortune lyfte to flye
There may no man of her course withholde
Lette no man enuy on blynde prosperite
Beth ware by this ensample yonge & olde

¶ Lucifer.

¶ Lucifer, though he an angel were
And nat a man, as him wyll I begynne
For though fortune may nat angel dere
From hye degre, yet fel he for his synne
Down in to hell, where he is yet ynne
O Lucifer, brightest of angels all
Nowe art thou Sathanas, that maist not twin
Out of misery, in whiche thou art fall.

¶ Adam.

¶ Lo Adam, in the feld of Damascene
With godes owne finger wrought was he
And not ygoten of mannes sperm vncleene
And welte al paradise saue o tree
Neuer worldely man had so hye degre
As Adam, til he for misgouernaunce
Was dryuen out of his high prosperite
To labour and to hell, and to mischaunce

¶ Sampson.

¶ Lo Sampson, whiche that was annunciate
By the angel, longe or his natiuite
And was to god almighty consecrate
And stode in nobles, whyle he might se
Was neuer suche another, as was he
To speke of strength, and therto hardynesse
But to his wiues tolde he his secre(te)
Thrugh which he slough hym self for wrechednesse

¶ Sampson this noble & mighty champion
Without weapen, saue his handes two
He slough and al to rente the lyon
Toward his wedding, walkyng by the wey
His false wife couthe hym so please and pray
Tyl she his counsayle knewe, & she vntrewe
Vnto his foes, his counsayle gan bewray
And him forsoke, and toke another newe

¶ An hundred foxes toke Sampson for yre
And al her tayles he togyther bonde
And fer the foxes tayles al on fyre
For he in euery tayle hath put a brande
And they brent all the cornes in that londe
And her olyues, and her vynes eke
A thousād men eke he slough with his honde
And had no wepen, but an asse cheke.

¶ And whā they were slayne, so thyrsted hym ꝑ he
Was wel nye lorne, for whiche he gan to prey
That god wold of hys payne, haue some pite
And sende him drinke, or els mote he dey
And of this asse cheke, that was so drey
Out of a wange torbe, sprange anon a well
Of whiche he dronke ynough, shortly to sey
Thus halpe him god, as Judicum can tell.

¶ By verey force, at Gasa on a nyght
Auenged the philistiens of that cite
The gates of the towne, he hath vp pyght
And on his backe, yearied hem hath he
Bore on an hyll, where as men myght hem se
O noble myghty Sampson, lefe and dere
Had thou not told to women thy secre
In al this worlde ne had be thy pere.

¶ This Sāpson neither sider drinke ne wyne
Ne on his herd came rasour none ne shere
By precepte of the messangere dyuyne.
For al his strength in his heres were
And fully twenty yere by yere
Of Israel, he had the gouernaunce
But after soon shall he wepe many a tere
For women shal bring him to myschaunce

¶ Vnto his lemman Dalyda he tolde
That in his heres, al his strength lay
And falsely to his foes she him solde
And slepyng in her barme vpon a day
She made to clippe or shere his heres away
And made his fomen all his craft espyen
And whan that they him fonde in suche araye
They bounde him faste, and put out his eyen

¶ But er his heres were clypped or shaue
There was no bonde that myght him bynde
But nowe is he put in prison in a caue
Where as they made him at ꝑ querne grinde
O noble Sāpson, strongest of mankynde
O whilom iuge in glory and rychesse
Now mayste thou wepe ꝑ thyn eyen blynde
Sith ꝑ art frō welc fal in to wretchednesse.

¶ The ende of this caytife was, as I shall ye
His fomen made a feest vpon a daye
And made him, as their fole before hem play
And this was in a temple of great araye
But at the last he made a foule a fraye
For he two pilers shoke, & made hem fall
And downe fel the temple al, and there it lay
And sloughe him selfe, and eke his fomen all

¶ This is to say, the princes euery chone
And eke thre thousād bodies were ther slayn
With falling of the great temple of stone
Of Sampson wol I no more sayn
Bith ware by this ensample olde and playn
That no men tel her counsayle to her wiues
Of such thing as they wold haue secret fayn
If that it touche her lymmes or her lyues.

¶ Of Hercules.

¶ Of Hercules, the souerayne conqueroure
Singen his werkes, laude, & hye renoun
For in his time, of strength he bare the floure
He sloughe and rafte the skyn of the lyon
And of the Centaurs, layde the boste adoun
He harpias slewe, the cruel birdes fell
He the golden appels rafte fro the dragon
He drewe out Cerberus the hounde of hell.

¶ He slewe the cruel tyraunt Busirus
He made his horse to frete him flesche & bone
He sloughe the very serpent venemous
Of Achelous two hornes, brake he that one
And he slewe Cacus, in a caue of stone
He sloughe the gyaunt Antacus the stronge
He sloughe the grisly bore, and that anon
And bare his herd vpon his spere longe.

¶ Was neuer wight, sith the worlde began
That sloughe so many monsters, as dyd he
Through the wide worlde, his name ran
What for his strength and his bounte
And euery realme went he for to se
He was so stronge, ꝑ no man might hym let
And at bothe worldes endes, he Trophe
In stede of boūdes, of brasse a pyllour set.

¶ A lemman had this noble champion
That hight Deianire, as fresh as Maye
And as clerkes make mencion
She hath him sent a shirt freshe and gaye
Alas this shirte, alas and wel awaye
Enuenemed was subtelly with all
That er he had wered it halfe a daye
It made his flesche all fro his bones fall.

But

Cwoot nat̄he leſſe, ſome clerkes her eyenen
Wil ouſ that bighte Nebuſ, that is maked
Be as be may, I wol her not acuſen
But on his body, the ſkirte he ware al naked
Tyl the ſtraſhe was with the brenyn flaked
And when he ſawe none other remedye
Jn hote coles, he hath him ſelfe teſked
Foꝛ with no benim bazned he to dye.

¶Thus ſterke this woꝛthy mighty Hercules
Lo, who may truſt in foꝛtune any thꝛowe
Foꝛ him that folowerh al the woꝛlde of pres
Oꝛ he be ware, is ofte layde ful lowe
Ful wiſe is he, that him ſelfe can knowe
Beware, foꝛ when that foꝛtune lyſte to glote
Than wayteth ſhe, her man downe to thꝛowe
Dꝛ ſuche a way, as he wouldē leſte ſuppoſe.

¶Nabugodonoſoꝛ.

The mighty trone, the pꝛecious tꝛeſoꝛe
The glozious ſepter, and royal maieſte
That had the kyng Nabugodonoſoꝛe
Wyth tonge vnneth may diſcryued be
Jn twiſe wanne Hieruſalem, that cyte
The veſſel of the temple he with him lad
At Babilon was his ſouereyne ſe
Jn whiche his glozy and his delite he had.

¶Of Hieruſalem, he dyd do geldē anone
The fayꝛeſt childꝛen of the blode royall
And made eche of hem to ben his thꝛall
Amonge all other Danyell was one
That was the wiſeſt of euerychone
Foꝛ he the dꝛemes of the kyng expowned
Where as in Caldee clerkes were there none
That wyſt to what fyne his dꝛeme ſowned

¶This pꝛoude kyng let make a ſtatu of golde
Sixty cubites longe, and ſtrein in bꝛede
To whiche ymage, bothe yonge and olde
Cōmaunded he ſhulde, and haue in dꝛede
Oꝛ in a foꝛneys, ful of flames rede
He ſhoulde be deed, that wouldē not obey
But neuer wolde aſſent to that dede
Danyell, ne his yonge felowes twey

¶This kyng of kynges, proude and elate
Wende god, that ſitteth in maieſte
Ne myght him nat bꝛeſte of his eſtate
But ſodaynly he loſte his dignyte
And lyke a beſt, him ſemed foꝛ to be
And eke hey as an ote, and laye therout
Jn rayn, with wilde beſtes walked he
Tyl certayn tyme was come about

And like an Egles fetheres were his herys
And his nayles lyke vnto briddes clawes were
God releued him at certayne peres
And yaue him wit, & than with many a tere
He thonked God, and al his lyfe in fere
Was he, foꝛ to do ayenſt, oꝛ more treſpace
And er that he layde was on his bere
He knew ꝓ god was ful of mꝛyght and grace

¶Balthaſer.

HIs ſonne, which ꝓ highte Balthaſare
That held ꝓ reign after his faderes day
He by his fader couthe not beware
Foꝛ pꝛoude he was of herte, and of aray
And eke an ydolaſter was he aye
His hygh eſtate, aſſured him in pride
But foꝛtune caſt him downe, & there he laye
And ſodainly his reigne gan deuyde

¶Jeroſt he made vnto his lordes all
Upon a tyme, he made hem bidden be
And than his officers gan he call
Goth bꝛing forth the veſſels (qꝺ he)
Which that my father, in his pꝛoſperite
Out of the temple of Hieruſalem bꝛaſte
And to our goddes thonken we
Of honour, that our elders with vs laſte

¶His wife, his lordes, and his concubines
Aye dꝛonken, whiles her appetytes laſte
Out of this noble veſſels, ſondꝛy wynes
And on a wall, this kynge his eyen caſte
And ſaw an hōde armeleſſe, that wꝛote faſte
Foꝛ feare of whiche he quoke, & fyghed ſoꝛe
This honde ꝓ Balthaſar made to ſoꝛe agaſte
Wꝛote (Mane techel phares) and no moꝛe

¶Jn al that londe, magyeien was ther none
That couthe expowne what this letter mene
But Danyel expowned it anone
And ſayd, kyng, god thy father ſent
Glozy and honour, reigne, tꝛeſour, & rent
And he was pꝛoude, & nothing god he dꝛad
And therfoꝛe great wꝛath god vpon him ſpent
And him bꝛaſte the reigne that he had

¶He was out caſt of mans compayne
With aſſes was his habytacion
And eten hey as a beſt, in were and bayne
Tyl that he knewe, by grace and by reſon
That god of heuen hath domination
Ouer euery tꝛeygne, and euery creature
And than had god of him compaſſion
And him reſtoꝛed his reigne and his figure.

¶Ex

Ne the ſ that art his ſonne, art yonde alſo
To werreſt al theſe thynges priuely
And art rebell to god, and his foe
Thus wrande ſhe of his veſſells boldly
Ne wyſe ene, and thy wenches ſynfully
Pronde of the ſame veſſels ſondrie wynis
Ywhyrryed falſe godders curſedly
Therfore to the ſhapen great payne is

This honde was ſent fro god, ſ on the wall
Wyper (Mane techel phares) truſte me
Thy regne is done, thou woteſt not al
Deuyded is thy realme, and it ſhall be
To Medes and to Perciens (quod he)
And that ſame night, the kyng was ſlawe
And Darius occupyed his dignyte
Though he ther to had neither right ne lawe.

¶ Lordynges, here enſample moiwe ye take
Pryde that in lordſhyp is no ſykerneſſe
For whan that fortune woi a man forſake
She berethaway his regne, and his rycheſſe
And eke his frendes, both more and leſſe
And what man hath fredes, through fortune
Myshap woi make him enemyes I geſſe
This prouerbe is ful ſothe, ſ ful commune.

¶ Zenobia.

Zenobia of Palmerye quene
(As writeth Perciens of her nobl..)
So worthy was in armes, and ſo kene
That no wight paſſed her in hardyneſſe
Ne in lynage, ne in none other gentyleneſſe
Of kynges blode of Perce ſhe is diſcended
I ſayr that ſhe had not moſt fayreneſſe
But of her hap ſhe might not be amended.

¶ From her childhoode I fynd that ſhe fledde
Office of woman, and to woode ſhe went
And many a wylde herres bloode ſhe ſhedde
With arowes brode, that ſhe to hem ſent
Ful was ſo ſwyfte, that ſhe anon hem hent
And whan that ſhe was elder, ſhe wold kyll
Lyons, Libardes, and Beres al to rent
And in her armes welde hem at her wyll.

¶ She durſt wylde beſtes dennes ſeke
And renne in the mountaynes all the nyght
And ſlepe vnder a buſſhe, ſ ſhe coulde eke
Wraſtell by very force, and by very might
With any yong mā, were he neuer ſo wight
There might no thynge in her armes ſtonde
She kepte her maydenhed from euery wight
To no man wayned ſhe to be bonde.

¶ But at laſt, her frendes hath her maryed
To Odenat, a prynce of that countre
Al were it ſo, that ſhe hem longe taryed
And ye ſhal vnderſtonde, how that he
Had ſuche fantaſyes as had ſhe
But natheleſſe, whan they were knyt in fere
They lyued in ioye and in felycite
Fo2 eche of hem had other leſe and dere

Saue one thyng, ſhe nolde neuer aſſent
By no way, that he ſhulde by her lye
But ones, for it was her playne entent
To haue a childe, the world to multiplye
And alſo ſone as ſhe myght aſpye
That ſhe was not with childe with that dede
Than wolde ſhe ſuffre him to do his fantaſye
Eftſones, and not but ones out of drede.

¶ And if ſhe were with childe at that aſſe
Nomore ſhuld he play that game
Tyl fully fourty dayes were paſſe
Than wolde ſhe ones ſuffre him the ſame
Al were this Odenat wilde or tame
He gate no more of her, for thus ſhe ſayde
It was to wyues lechery and ſhame
In other caſe, if men with hem playde

¶ Two ſonnes by this Odenat had ſhe
The which ſhe kept in vertue and lettrure
But now vnto our tale turne we
I ſay that ſo worſhypful a creature
And wiſe therwith, and large with meſure
So penyble in werre, and curteys eke
Nemore labour might in werre endure
Was non, though al this world mē wold ſeke

Her riche araye, ne myght not be tolde
As wel in veſſel as in her clothyng
She was al cladde in perry and in golde
And eke ſhe lefte not for nouе huntyng
To haue of ſondry tonges folke knowyng
Whan that ſhe leyſer had for to entende
To lerne bokes was al her lykyng
How ſhe in vertue her lyfe myght diſpende

¶ And ſhortly of this story for to treate
As doughty was her huſbonde as ſhe
So ſ they conquered many reignes greate
In the Orient, with many a fayre cyte
Appertaynaunt vnto the maieſte
Of Rome, ſ with ſtrength helde them faſte

He neuer might her for men do fle
All the whyle that Odenates dayes laste

Her batayles, who so lyste hem for to rede
Agayne Sapor the kyng, and other mo
And howe al this processe fyll in dede
Why she conquered, & what title she had therto
And after of her mischefe and of her wo
Howe that she was besieged, and take
Let him to my maister Petrarke go
That writeth ynough of this, I vndertake

Whan Odenat was ded, she mightyly
The realmes held, & with her owne honde
Agaynst her foes she fought truely
That ther was no prince ne kyng, in al ꝑ lõde
But were glad, if they that grace fonde
That she ne shulde vpon his londe werreye
With her they made alyaunce by bonde
To be in peace, and let hem ryde and pleye

The Emperour of Rome Claudius
He him before, the Romayne Galyen
He durste neuer be so corragyous
He none Armen, ne none Egyptien
He Surrien, ne none Arabyen
Within the felde, that durst with her fyghte
Lest ꝑ she wolde hem with her hondes sleen
Or with her meyne, put hem to flyghte

In dynges habyte went her soones two
As the heires of her realmes all
And Herennano and Timalleo
Her names wer, as Persiens hem call
But aye fortune, hath in her hony gall
This mighty quene, may no whyle endure
Fortune out of her reigne made her to fal
To wrecchednesse, and to myschaunce.

Aurelyan, whan that the gouernaunce
Of Rome came in his hondes twey
He shope vpon this quene to do vengeaunce
And with his legions, he rode his wey
Towarde Zenobia, and shortly for to say
He made her flye, and at laste her hent
And fetered her, and eke her children tway
And wan the londe, & home to Rome he went

Amonge other thinges that he wan
Her chare, that of gold was wrought ryche
This great Romayn, this Aurelian
Hath with him lad, that for min shulde ly
Before his triumphe walked she
With golden chaynes on her necke hongyng
Crowned she was, as after her degre
And ful of pierre charged her clothyng

Alas fortune, she that whylom was
Redeful to kynges, and to emperoures
Now gaureth al the people on her, alas
And she that helmed was in starke stoures
And wan by force townes stronge, & toures
Shal on her heed nowe were autremyte
And she that bare the septre ful of floures
Shal bere a distaffe, her coste for to quyte.

Nero.

Al though that Nero were as vycious
As any fende, ꝑ lyeth ful lowe adoun
Yet he, as telleth vs Suetonius
Al this world had in subiection
Both este, and west, and Septemtrion
Of rubyes, saphyrs, and of perles whyte
Were al his clothes brouded vp and doun
For he in gemmes greatly gan delyte

More delycate, more pompous of aray
More proude, was neuer Emperour, than he
That like clothe that he had worne a day
After that tyme, he nolde it neuer se
Nettes of gold threde had he great plente
To fysshe in Tiber, whan him lyst to play
His lustes were as lawe, in his degre
For fortune as his frende wolde him obey

He Rome brente for his delycacye
The Senatours he slewe vpon a day
To here how her wyues wold wepe & crye
And slowe his brother, & by his syster lay
His mother made he in a pyroute aray
For he her wombe let slytte, to beholde
Where he conceyued was, so wela way
That he so lyte of his mother tolde

No terres out of his eyen, for that sight
He came, but sayd, a fayre woman was she
Great wonder is, that he coude or might
Be domisman, of her dede beaute
The wine to brynge him commaunded he
And dranke anon, non other wo he made
Whan might is ioyned vnto cruelte
Alas, to depe wyl the venyme wade

In youth a mayster had this emperour
To teche him letture, and curtesye
For of nobleye he was the floure

As in his tyme, but if his bokes lye
And whyles his maister had of him maistrye
He made him so conning and so souple
That longe tyme it was or tyrannye
Or any vice, durste in him vncouple.

Nero his mayster was, of which I deuyse
Because Nero had of him suche drede
For he for his vices wold him chastyse
Discretly as by worde, and not by dede
That he wolde say, an emperour mote nede
Be vertuous, and hate tyrannye
For whiche he made him in a bathe to blede
In both his armes, tyl he must dye.

This Nero had eke of a customaunce
In youthe, ayenst his mayster to ryse
Which afterward, him thought gret grevaunce
Because he ofte wolde him chastise
Therfore he made him dye in this wyse
To chose in a bathe to dye in this manere
Rather than to haue a nother turmentyse
And thus hath Nero slayne his mayster dere

Now fel it so, that fortune lyste no longer
The hygh pride of Nero to cherysshe
For tho he were stronge, yet was she stronger
She thought thus, by god I am to nyce
To set a man, that is fulfylled of vice
In hye degre, and an emperour h... fall
By god out of his sete I wol him tryce
Whan he leste weneth, sonnest shal he fall

The people rose vpon him on a nyght
For his defaute, and whan he it aspyed
Out of his doores anon he hath him dyght
Lone, and there he wende haue ben alyed
He knocked fast, & ay the more he cryed
The faster therte they the doores all
Tho wyst he wel, he had him selfe begyled
And went his way, no lenger durste he call

The people cried & rombled vp and doun
That with his eeres he herde how they sayd
Where is this false tyraunt, this Neroun
For fear ful nere out of his wytte he brayde
And to his goddes, right pitously he prayde
For socoure, but it might not betyde
For drede of this, him thought that he deyde
And ran into a gardeyn, him to hyde.

And in this gardaine, founde he choyles twey
Syttyng by a fyre great and reed
And to the choyles two he gan to prey
To slee him, and to gryde of his heed
That to his body, whan he were deed
Were no dispyte done, for his diffame
Him selfe he slough, he coulde no better reed
Of whiche fortune lough and had game.

Holofernes.

Was neuer capitayne vnder a kyng
That reignes mo, put in subiection
Ne stronger was in felde, of all thyng
As in his time, ne greater of renoun
Ne more pompous in hygh presumption
Than Holoferne, whiche fortune aye kyste
And so prosperously lad him vp and doun
Tyll that he deed was er that he wyste.

Not only that this worlde had of him awe
For lesyng of richesse and lyberte
But he made euery man renye his lawe
Nabugodonosor was lorde, sayd he
None other god shuld honoured be
Ayenst his hest, there dare no wight trespace
Saue in Bethulia, a stronge cyte
Where Eliachym was preest of that place

But take kepe of the dethe of Holopherne
Amyd his host, he dronke laye all nyght
Within his tent, large as is a berne
And yet for al his pompe, & al his might
Judith, a woman, as he lay vpright
Slepyng, his heed of smote, and fro his trunke
Ful preuely she stale, from euery wight
And with his heed, vnto her town she wente.

Antiochus.

What nedeth it of kynge Antiochus
To tel his hygh and royall maieste
His great pryde, hys werke venemus
For suche an other man nas neuer as he
Redeth what that he was in Machabe
And redeth the proude wordes that he sayde
And why he fyl from his prosperyte
And in an hyll, how wretchedly he deyde.

Fortune him had enhaunced so in pryde
That verily he wende he might attayne
Vnto the sterres, vpon euery syde
And in a balaunce, to wey eche mountayne
And al the floodes of the see restrayne
And goddes people had he moste in hate
Hem wold he slee, in turment and in payne
Weenyng that god ne myght hys pride abate.

¶ And for that Archanore and Tymathe
By iewes were venquished myghtyly
Unto the Jewes such an hate had he
That he had greythe his chare full hastely
And swore and sayde, ful dispytously
Unto Hierusalem he wolde ertsone
To wreke his yre on it ful cruelly
But of his purpose was he let ful sone.

¶ God for his manace him sore smote
With invysible wounde, aye incurable
That in his guttes carfe so and bote
That his paynes were impotrable
And certainly the wrethe was resonable
For many a mannes guttes dyd he payne
But from his purpose, cursed & dampnable
For al his smerte, he nolde him not restrayne.

But bade anon, aparayle his hoste
And sodaynly, or he than was ware
God daunted all his pryde, & al his boste
For he so sore fel out of his chare
That al his lymmes and his skyn to tare
So that he ne myght gone ryde
But in a chayre, men aboute him bare
Al forbrused bothe backe and syde.

¶ The wreche of god him smote so cruelly
That in his body wicked wormes crept
And therwith al he stanke so horribly
That none of all his meyne, that him kept
Whether that he woke or els slept
Ne myght not of him the stynke endure
And in his mischefe he wayled & ever wept
And knewe god, lorde of every creature

¶ To al his host, and to him self also
Ful lothsom was the stynke of his carayne
No man might him beare to ne fro
And in his stynke, & in his horrible payne
He sterfe ful wretchedly on a mountayne
Thus hath this robbour, and this homycide
That many a man made to wepe and plaine
Suche guerdon, as belongeth to pryde.

¶ Alexander.

The storie of Alexander is so comune
That every wight, þ hath discrecioun
Hath herde som what or al, of his fortune
This wyde worlde, as in conclusioun
He wan by strength, and for his renoun
They were glad for peace unto him sende
The pryde of man, and host he layde adoun
Where so he came, unto the worldes ende.

¶ Comparison might yet never be maked
Betwixt him, and an other conquerour
For al this world, for dred of hi hath quaked
He was of knyghthod, & of fredome flour
Fortune him made the heyre of high honour
Save wyne & women, nothig might aswage
His hygh entent in armes and labour
So was he ful of lovyng corage.

What pryce were it to hi, though I you tolde
Of Darius, & of a hundred thousande mo
Of princes, erles, and knyghtes bolde
Whiche he conquered, and brought to wo
I say as ferre as a man may ryde or go
The world was his, what shuld I more drawe
For though I wrote and tolde you ever mo
Of his knighthode, it might not suffise

Twelve yere he raigned, as I rede i macha
Philyppes sonne of Macedone he was
That first was kynge of Grece, that countre
O worthy gentyl Alexander, alas
That ever shulde the fall suche a caas
Enpoysonned of thy folke thou were
Thy fyer, fortune hath turned in to an ace
And yet for the ne wept she never a tere

¶ Who shall yeve men teres to complayne
The dethe of gentilnesse, and of fraunchise
That al the worlde welded in his demayne
And yet him thought it myght not suffyse
So ful was his corage of hygh empryse
Alas, who shall me helpe to endyte
False fortune, and poyson to despyse
The whiche of all this wo I wyte.

¶ Julius Cesar.

By wisdom, manhode, & high labour
From humble bed to royal maieste
Up rose he, Julius the conquerour
That all the occident, by londe and see
Won by strength of honde, or els by trete
And unto Rome made him tributary
And sithe of Rome, emperour was he
Til that fortune wexe his adversary.

¶ O mygthy Cesar, that in Thessaly
Ayenst Pompei, father thyn in lawe
That of the Orient had the chyvalry
As ferre as that the day begynneth to dawe
The through knighthode hast take & slawe

Save

Saue fewe folke, ꝑ with ꝓpeius fledde
Though which ꝑ purrest al ꝑ Orient in awe
Thanke fortune, that so well the spedde.

Cast now a lytell whyle I woll bewayle
This Pompei, this noble gouernour
Of Rome, which that fledde at this batayle
I say one of his men, a false traytour
His herd of smote, to wynne him fauour
Of Julius, and to him the heed brought
Was Pompei, of the Orient conquerour
That fortune vnto suche a fyne the wrought

To Rome agayne repayreth Julius
With his triumphe lauriate ful hye
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius
That euer had of his hye estate enuye
Ful priuely had made conspyracye
Ayenst this Julius, in subtei wyse
In cast the place, in which he shuld dye
With bodkyns, as I shall you deuyse

This Julius vnto the capitol went
Vpon a day, as he was wont to gone
And in the capitol, anon him hent
This false Brutus, and his other fone
And stycked him with bodkyns anone
With many a wounde, & thus they let him lye
But neuer grutched he at no stroke but one
Or els at two, but if his story lye.

So manly was this Julyus of herte
And so wel loued estately honeste
That tho his derdy woũdes so sore smarte
His mantel ouer his hippes caste he
For no man shulde se his priuyte
And as he lay in dyeng on a traunce
And wyll verryly that dye shuld he
Of honesty yet had he remembraunce.

Lucan to the this story I recommende
And to Sueton, and Valery also
That of this storye writen wonde and ende
How that these conquerours two
Fortune was first a frende, & sythe a foe
No man trust vpon her fauour longe
But haue her in awayte for euermo
Nyneue on all the conquerours stronge.

¶ Cresus.

The riche Cresus, whilom kynge of Lyde
Of whiche Cresus, Cirus sore him drad
Yet was he caught amydde al his pride
And to dyeme, men to the fyre him lad
But suche a rayne down fro ꝑ firmamẽt shad
That quenyt the fire, & made him to scape
But to bewaare yet no grace he had
Tyl fortune on the galowes made him gape

Whan he escaped was, he could not stynt
For to begyn a newe araye agayne
He wende wel, for that fortune him sent
Such happe, ꝑ he escaped through the rayne
That of his foes he myght not be slayne
And eke a swenen vpon a nyght he mette
Of which he was so proude, & eke so fayne
That in vengeaunce he all his hert sette

¶ Vpon a tree he was, as him thought
There Jupiter him wisshe, both backe & syde
And Phebus eke a fayre to well him brought
To dyy him with, & therwith werre his pride
And to his doughter that stode him beside
Which ꝑ he knewe in hie sentence habounde
He bad her tell what it signyfyed
And she his dreme right thus dyd expounde

¶ The tree (qõ she) the galous is to mene
And Jupiter betokeneth snowe and rayne
And Phebus, with his towel so clene
Betokeneth the sonne beames, soth to sayne
Thou shalt honged be, father certayne
Rayne shal the washe, & sonne shall the dyie
Thus she warned him ful plat & full playne
His doughter, that called was Phanye.

¶ And honged was Cresus the proude kyng
His royal trone myght him not auayle
Tragedye is none other maner thynges
Ne can in syngyng crye ne bewayle
But for that fortune alday wol assayle
With vnware stroke, ꝑ reignes ꝑ ben proude
For whõ men trusteth her, than wol she fayle
And couer her bright face with a cloude.

¶ Peter of Spayne.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glory of Spaine
Whom fortune helde so hygh in maieste
Wel ought men thy pytous deth complayne
Out of thy londe, thy brother made the fle
And after at a siege by subtelte
Thou were betrayed, & ladde vnto his tente
Where as he with his owne honde slue the
Succedyng in thy reigne and in thy rente

The felde of snowe, vh the egle of black therin
Caught vh the lymrod, coloured as the glede

Ne wyfe nek emty ywelle. A all this tyme
The leeffull malle was werker of this dede
Not Charles Oliuer, that tolde nye he be
Of trouthe and honoure, but of Armoryke
Genilion Oliuer, corcupt for mede
Brought this worthy kyng in suche a dyke.

¶ Perro kinge of Cypre.

O worthy Perro, kyng of Cypre also
That Alisaundre wan by hyghe maistrye
Full many an hethen wrought well thou wo
Of which thine owen lieges had enuy
And for no thyng, but for thy chyualry
They in thy bed han slayn the by the morowe
Thus can fortune her whele gouerne & gye
And out of ioye bring men to sorowe.

¶ Barnabo vicosite.

O Willan great Barnabo vicounte
God of deryte, & scourge of Lombardye
Why shulde I not thin infortune accounte
Sens in astate thou clomben were so hye
Thy brotheres sone, that was thy double aire
For he thy neuewe was, and sonne in lawe
Within his prison made the to dye
But why ne how not I, þ thou were slawe.

¶ Hugelyne of Pyse.

Of the erle Hugelyne of Pyse the langoure
There may no tonge tel for pyte
But lyte I out of Pyse stonte a roure
In whiche roure in prison put was he
And with him ben his lytel children thre
The eldest scarsly fyue yere of age
Alas fortune, it was a great cruelte
Suche bryddes for to put in suche a cage.

¶ Dampned was he to dye in that prison
For Roger, whiche that bysshop was of Pise
Had on him made a false suggestyon
Through which þ people gan upon him ryse
And put him in prison, in suche a wise
As ye haue herde, and meate & drynke he had
So smal, that duretly it may suffyse
And therwithall it was ful poze and bad

¶ And on a day befel, that in that houre
Whil that his meete wont was to be brought
The gayler shette the doores of the toure
He herde it wel, but he spake right nought
And in his hert anon there fyll a thought
That they for hunger wold do him dyen
Alas (qd he) alas that I was wrought
Therwith the teres fyll fro his eyen.

¶ His yong sonne, that thre yere was of age
Unto him said, father father why do ye wepe
Wyl the gayler bring us pitage
Is there no mete that ye do kepe
I am so hongry, that I may not slepe
Now wold god that I might slepe euer
Than shuld not hunger in my wombe crepe
There nys nothyng but bred þ me wer leuer

¶ Thus day by day, this chylde began to crye
Ful in his fathers armes adoune it laye
And sayd, farwell father I mote dye
And kysse his father, and deyde the same day
And when the wofull father dyed is fey
For wo, his armes two he gan to byte
And said alas, fortune and weylaway
Thy falce whele, my wo al may it wyte.

¶ His children wend, that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnewe, and not for wo
And said: father, do not so (alas)
But rather eate the flesshe upon us two
Our flesshe þ yaue us, take out flesshe us fro
And eate ynough, right thus they to him said
And after that within a day or two
They laid hem in his lappe adoun, & deyde

Thus ended is this myghty erle of Pise
Him selfe dispoyled eke, for hunger starke
From high estate fortune away him carke
Of this Tragedy, it ought ynough suffise
Who so wol here it in a longer wyse
Rede ye the grete poete of Italye
That hyght Dante, for he can it all deuyse
Fro poynt to poynt, not a worde wol he falle.

¶ Here endeth the Monkes tale.

¶ Here styrreth the knyght the Monke of his tale, and here foloweth the prologue of the Nonnes preest.

HO (qd the knyght) good sir no more of this
That ye haue sayd, is right ynough ywys
And muche more, for litell hevynesse
Is right ynough to muche folke, I gesse
I saye for me, it is a great disease

Where

where as men haue delyt and ease
To here of her sodayne fal, alas
And the contrary is ioye and solas
As when a man hath ben in poore estate
And clymbeth vp, and wexeth fortunate
And there abydeth in prosperite
Eche thinges is gladsome, as thinketh me
And of swiche thing were good for to tell.
¶ Per qð our hoste by sayne Poules bel
Ye say right soth, this monke clappeth loude
He spake, how fortune couered with a cloude
I wote not what, and also of a Tragedy
Right now ye herde, and perdy no remedy
It is for to bewayen, ne complayne
That that is done, and als it is a payne
As ye haue sayde, so here of beuyneste
Sir monke no more of this, so god you blesse
Your tale anoyeth al this company
Swiche talkyng is not worth a butterfly
For therin is there no disport ne game
Therfore sir monke, dan Piers by your name
I pray you hertely, telle vs somwhat elles
For sykerly, nere clinkyng of your belles
That on your bridel honge, on euery syde
By heuen kyng, that for vs all dyde
I haue er this ben fall downe for slepe
Although the slough had ben neuer so depe
Thus had your tale al be tolde in vayne
For certaynly, as that thefe sercheth ayne
Where as a man may haue none audience
Eche thyng, that nought helpeth it to haue sentence
And wel I wote, the substaunce is in me
If any thyng, shal wel reported be
Sir, say somwhat of huntyng I you pray
Nay (qð this mõke) I haue no lust to play
Now let an other telle, as I haue tolde.
¶ Thã spake our hoste with rude speche & bolde
And sayed vnto the nonnes preest anon
Come nere & preest, come hither thou sir John
Tell vs such a thing, as may our hertes glade
Be blythe, though thou ryde vpon a iade
What though thy horse be bothe foule & lene
If he wol serue the, reche not a bene
Loke that thy herte be merry euer mo
¶ Yes sir (qð he) yes host, so mote I go
But I be mery, wo is me wol be blamed
And right anon, his tale he hath atamed
And thus he sayde, vnto vs euerychon
This swete preest, this goodly man sir John

¶ Here endeth the prologue of the Nonnes preest, and here followeth his tale.

A Pore wedowe, somdele stept in age
Was whylom dwelling in a poore cotage
Beside a grove, stonding in a dale
This wydowe, of whiche I tel you my tale
Sens the day that she was laste a wyfe
In patience, ledde a ful simple lyfe
For litel was her catell and her rent
By husbondrye, of suche as god her sent
She fonde her self, & she her doughters two
Thre large sowes had she, and no mo
Thre kyne, & eke a shepe that hight Malle
Wel fooly was her boure, and eke her halle
In whiche she ete many a slender mele
Of poynant sauce, ne knewe she neuer a dele
Ne deynty morsell passed through her throte
Her diet was accordaunt to her cote
Repletion ne made her neuer sycke
A temperate diete was her physyke
And exercise, and herte fulfisaunce
The gout let her nothyng for to daunce
Ne apoplexie shent nat her heed
No wyne dranke she, whyte ne reed
Her boyde was most stuffed with white & blacke
Milke & broun bred, in which she fonde no lacke
Seynde bacon, & somtyme an ey or two
For she was as it were a maner dey.
¶ A yerde she had, enclosed al aboute
With stickes, and a drie dich without
In whiche she had a cocke hight Chaũtecleere
In al the lande, of crowing nas his pere
His voyce was merier than the merry orgon
On masse dayes, that in the churches gon
Wel sykerer was his crowing in his loge
Than is a clocke, or in an abbey an orloge
By nature he knewe eche ascencion
Of the equinoctial in the toun
For when degrees .xv. were ascended
Than crew he, that it might not be amended
His combe was redder than the fine corall
And batteled, as it had be a castel wall
His byl was blacke, as any geet it shene
Lyke asure were his legges and his tone
His nayles whyter than the lylie floure
And lyke the burned golde was his colloure.
¶ This gentel cocke, had in gouernaunce
Seuen hennes, to done his pleasaunce
Which were his sustres, and his paramours
And wonder lyke to hym, as of colours
Of whiche the fayrest hewed in the throte

Was called fayre damoysell pertelote
Her fethered her a hundred tymes a day
And she him pleyed, al that euer she may
Craeps she was, discrete, and debonayre
And compenable, and bare her selfe so fayre
Syns the tyme that she was seuen nyght olde
That truely she, she hath the hert in holde
Of Chauntecleer, lokyng in euery lyth
He loueth her so, that wel was him therwith
But such a lope it was to here hem synge
Whan the bryght sonne gan to sprynge
In swete accorde, my lefe is fette in londe
For that tyme, as I haue vnderstonde
Beestes and bryddes coulde speke and synge
And it so fell, that in the dawnynge
As Chauntecleer, among his wyues all
Sat on his perche, that was in the hall
And nexte him sat his fayre Pertelote
This Chaunteclere gan to grone in his throte
As a man in his dreme is dreuched sore
And whan ý Pertelot thus herde him rore
She was agast, and sayd herte dere
What eyleth you to grone in this maniere
Ye be a very sleper, fye for shame.
And he answerd thus, by god madame
I pray you, that ye take it not in greue
By god I mette, I was in suche mischeue
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afrayght
Nowe god (qd he) my sweuen rede aryght
And kepe my body out of foule prysoun
Me mette, that I romed vp and doun
Within our yerde, where I sawe a beest
Was like an hound, and wolde haue made areest
Upon my body, and wold haue had me dead
His colour was betwyxt yelow and reed
And typped was his tayle, and both his eeres
With black, vnlike the remenant of his heeres
His snoute smal, with glowynge eyen tweyn
Yet for his loke, almost for feare I deyn
This causeth me my gronyng doutelesse.
Away (qd she) fye for shame herteles
Alas (qd she) for by god aboue
Nowe haue ye lost my hert, and al my loue
I can not loue a coward by my faythe
For certes, what so any woman sayth
We al desyre, if that it myght be
To haue husbondes, hardy, wyse, and fre
And secrete, and no nygarde, ne no fole
Ne him that is agast of euery tole
Ne none auauntour, by that god aboue
How durst ye say for shame, vnto your loue
That any swerem might make you a fearde
Ne ye no mannes hert, and haue a berde
Alas, and con ye be a feerde of swevenis
Nothing but vanite god wotte in swevenis
Swevens ben engendred of replecions
And of fume, and of complecions
When humours ben to habundant in a wight
Certes this dreme, which ye haue met to nyght
I tel you trouthe, ye may trust me
Cometh of superfluite, and rede colour parde
Which cause folke to drede in their dremes
Of arowes, and of fire with red lemes
Of red beestes, that wol hem byte
Of contek, and of wasspes great and lyte
Right as the humour of melancolye
Causeth many a man in sleepe to crye
For feere of great bulles, and beres blake
Or elis that blacke develes wol hem take
Of other humours coulde I tell also
That werke a men in sleepe moche wo
But I wol passe, as lightly as I can.
Lo Caton, which that was so wise a man
Sayd he not thus, do no force of dremes
Nowe sir (qd she) when we flee fro ý bemes
For goddes loue, as taketh some laxatyue
Up peryl of my soule, and of my lyfe
I counsayle you the beste, I wol not lye
That both of colour, and of melancolye
Ye purge you, and for ye shal not tarye
Though in this towne, be none apotecarye
I shal my selfe two herbes techen you
That shall be for your hele, and for your prow
And in our yerde, the herbes shal I fynde
The whiche I haue of her propertee by kynde
To purge you bynethe, and eke abouue
Forget not this, for gobbes dowre loue
Ye be right colerike of complection
Where the sonne is in his ascension
Ne fynde you not replete of humours hote
For if ye do, I dare wel lay a grote
That ye shal haue a fever tertiane
Or elis an ague, that may be your bane
A day or two, ye shal haue digestiues
Of wormes, or ye take your laxatiues
Of laurel, centorie, and of fumetere
Or elis of elder beries, that growe there
Of catapuce, or of gaytres berris
Of herbe yue, growing in our yerde ý merry is
Pluckе hem vp as they growe, and eate hem in
Be merry husbonde, for your fader kin
Dredeth no dreme, I can say no more
Madame (qd he) gramercy of your lore
But natheles, as touching dan Caton
That of wisdome hath so great renoun
Though he bade no dremes for to drede

By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctorite
Than euer Caton was, so more I the
That al the reuers saythe of this sentence
Ben haue wel founde by experience
That dremes ben significacions
As wel of ioye, as of tribulacions
That folke endure, in this life present
Ther nedeth to make of this none argument
The very preef sheweth it indede
One of the greatest auctours that men rede
Sayth thus, ỹ whilom two felowes went
On pilgrimage, in ful good entent
And happed so, they come into a toun
Where as there was suche congregacion
Of people, and eke of herbygage
That they ne founde, as muche as a cotage
In whiche they bothe might yloged be
Wherfore they mote of necessyte
As for that nyght, departe company
And eche of hem gothe to hys hosteiry
And toke his lodgyng, as it wolde fall
That one of hem, was lodged in a stall
Farre in a yerde, with oxen of the plough
That other man was lodged wel ynough
As was his auenture, or his fortune
That vs gouerneth all, as in comune
And so befel, longe or it were day
This man mette in his bedde, there as he lay
Howe that his felowe gan vponhim call
And sayd alas, for in an oxes stall
This night shal I be murdered, there I lye
Nowe helpe me dere brother or I dye
In al haste, come to me (he sayd)
This man out of hys slepe for feare abrayd
But whan he was waked of hys slepe
He turned him, and toke of this no kepe
Hym thought his dreme was but a vanite
Thus twise in hys slepe dremed he
And at thirde tyme, yet hys felawe
Cam as him thought, and said I nowe am slawe
Beholde my bloudy woundes, depe & wyde
Aryse vp erly, in the morowe tyde
And at the west gate of the toun (quod he)
A carre ful of donge, there shalt thou se
In whiche my body is hyde ful priuely
Do thou that carre arreste boldely
My goldbe caused my deth, soth to sayne
And told him euery point how he was slayne
With a ful petous face, pale of hewe
And trust wel his dreme he founde right trewe
For on the morowe, as sone as it was day
To his felowes inne, he toke the way
And when that he came to the oxes stall
After his felowe, he began to call.
The hosteler answerde hym anon
And sayd, sir your felowe is gon
As sone as it was day, he went out of ỹ toun
This man gan fal in suspection
Remembring of his dremes that he mette
And forth he gothe, no lenger would he lette
Vnto the west gate of the towne, and fonde
A donge carte, as it were to donge londe
That was arayed in the same wyse
As ye haue herde the deed man deuise
And with hardy herte, he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and iustice of this felony
My felowe murdred is this same nyght
And in this carte he lyeth, gapyng vpright
I cry out on the ministers (quod he)
That shulde kepe and rule this cyte
Harowe alas, here lyeth my felowe slayne
What should I more of this tale sayne.
The people out start, & caste ỹ cart to groũde
And in the myddel of the donge they founde
The deed man, that murdred was al newe.
O blisful god, that arte so good and trewe
Lo, howe thou bewrayest murdre alway
Murdre wol out, that se we day by day
Murdre is so wlatsome and abhominable
To god, that so iuste is and reasonable
That he ne wol it suffre healed to be
Though it abyde a yere, two, or thre
Murdre wol out, this is my conclusion
And right anon, the ministers of the toun
Haue hent the carter, and sone him pyned
And eke the hosteler so sore engyned
That they beknewe her wickednesse anone
And were hanged by the necke bone
Here may ye se that dremes ben to drede.
And certes, in the same leefe I rede
Right in the next chapiter after thys
I gabbe not, so haue I ioye and blys
Two men wold haue passed ouer the se
For certaye causes, in to a ferre countre
If the wynde ne had be contrarye
That made hem in a cite to tarye
That stode ful mery vpon an hauen syde
But on an day, ayenst an euen tyde
The wynde gan chaũge, & blewe as hem lest
Joly and glad, they went to rest
And cast hem ful erly for to sayle
But herken, to one man fel a great meruayle
That one of hem, in sleping as he lay
He met a wonders dreme, agayn the day
Him thought a man stode by his beddes syde

And

And him comaunded, that he shulde abyde
And seyd hym thus, if thou to morow wende
Thou shalt be dreint, my tale is at an ende.
He woke, and tolde his felowe what he mette
And prayd him hys voyage for to lette
As for that day, he prayd hym for to abyde
His felowe, that lay by hys beddes syde
Gan for to laugh, and scorned him ful faste
No dreme (quod he) may so my herte agaste
That I wol let for to do my thynges
I set not a strawe for thy dreminges
For swevens ben but vanites and japes
Men dreme al day of owles and of apes
And eke of many a mase therwithall
And dremen of thing that neuer was, ne shall
But sythe I se that thou wolt here abyde
And thus slouthe wylfully thy tyde
God wote it rueth me, and have good day
And thus he toke his leue, and went hys way
But er he had half his course yseyled
I not why, ne what myschaunce it eyled
But casuelly the shyppes botome rent
And shyp and men, vnder the water went
In syght of other shyppes beside
That with hem sayled at the same tyde
And therfore fayre Pertelot so dere
By suche ensamples olde, mayst thou lere
That no man shulde be to recheles
Of dremes, for I say the doutelesse
That many a dreme ful sore is for to drede
Lo in the life of saynt Kenelme we rede
That was Kenelphus sonne, the noble kyng
Of Mercenrike, howe Kenelm mette a thyng
A lytel er he were murdred on a day
His murder in his vision he say
His norice hym expowned it euery dele
His sweven, and badde him kepe him wele
For treyson, but he was but seuen yere olde
And therfore lytel tale he therof tolde
Of any dreme, so holy was his herte
By god, I had rather than my sherte
That ye had herde his legende, as have I
Dame Pertelot, I say to you trewly
Macrobius, that writeth the avision
In Affrike, of the worthy Scipion
Affirmeth dremes, and saythe that they been
Warning of thinges, that we after seen
And forthermore I pray you loketh wel
In the olde Testament, of Daniel
Yf he held dremes for vanyte
Rede eke of Joseph, and there shal ye se
Where dremes ben somtyme, but I say nat all
Warning of thinges, that after shall fall.
Lo of Egipt the kynge, that hight Pharao
Hys baker, and his butteler also
Whether they felt none effecte in dremes.
Who so wol seke actes of sondry remes
May rede of dremes a wonder thyng
Lo Cresus which was of Lyde kyng
Mette he not that he, sate vpon a tre
Which signified he shulde honged be
Lo Adromeda, that was Hectors wyfe
That day that Hector shulde lese his lyfe
She dremed in the same nyght before
How the lyfe of Hector shulde be lore
Yf that day he went vnto batayle
She warned him, but it might nat auayle
He went for to fight nere the lesse
But he was slayne anone of Achilles
But that tale is to long to tell
And eke it is nigh day I may nat dwell
Shortely I say, as for conclusion
That I shall have of this avision
Adversite: and I say furthermore
That I ne tel of laxatyues no store
For they ben venemous, I wote it wele
I hem defye, I love hem neuer a dele
But let vs speke of myrthe, and stynte al this
Madame Pertelot, so have I blis
Of one thyng god hath me sent large grace
For when I se the beautie of your face
Ye ben so scarlet red about your eyen
It maketh al my drede for to dyen
For also syker, as In principio
Mulier est hominis confusio.
Madame, the sentence of this latyn is
Woman is mannes ioye and his blis
For when I fele on nyght your soft syde
Al be it that I may not on you ryde
For that our perche is made so narowe alas
I am so full of ioye and of solas
That I defye bothe sweven and dreme
And with ỳ word he flew down fro ỳ beme
For it was day, and eke the hennes all
And with a chuckle, he gan hem for to call
For he had founde a corne lay in the yarde
Royall he was, and he no more a fearde
He fethered Pertelot twenty tyme
And tradde her eke as ofte, er it was prime
He loketh as it were a grymme lyon
And on his toes he romed vp and down
Him deyned not to set his fete to the grounde
He chucked, when he had a corne yfounde
And to hym than ran his wyues all
As royall as a prince in his hall
Leaue I this chaunteclere, in his pasture

And

Ab after wol I tel of his aduenture.
Whan ꝑ monneth in whiche ꝑ worlde began
That hight Marche, ꝑ god first made man
Was complete, and passed were also
Syth Marche began, xwenty dayes & two
Befyll that Chaunteclere, in al hys pryde
His seuen wyues walkyng hym besyde
Caste vp his eyen to the bright sonne
That in the signe of Taurus was ironne
Fourty degrees & one, and somwhat more
Ye knewe he by kynde, and by none other lore
That it was prime, & crew vb a blisful steuen
The sonne he sayde is clombe vp to heuen
Fourty degrees & one, & somwhat more ywis
Madame Pertelot, my worldes blysse
Herken howe thys blisful byrdes synge
And se the freshe floures howe they sprynge
Full is myn herte of reuel, and solas
But todayuity hym fel a sorowefull caas
For euer the latter ende of ioye is wo
God wote, worldely ioye is soone ago
And ꝑ a rethore coude fayre endyte
He in a cronycle might sauely wryte
As for a souerayne notabilyte
Nowe euery wise man herken to me
This story is al so trewe I vndertake
As is the boke of Launcelot du lake
That women holden in ful great reuerence
Nowe wol I turne ayen to my sentence.
A col fox (ful of sleyghe and iniquitie)
That in the grene had wonned yeres thre
By hygh imaginacion a forne caste
The same night, thrugh the hedge braste
Into the yerde, there Chaunteclere the fayre
Was wont and eke his wyues to repayre
And in a bedde of wortes styl he lay
Tyl it was passed vndren of the day
Waytyng his tyme, on Chaunteclere to fall
As gladly done these homicides all
That in a wayte lye to murdre men
O false murdrer, rechyng in thy den
O newe Scariot, and newe Ganylon
False dissimuler, O greke Synon
That broughtest Troy vtterly to sorowe
O Chaunteclere, acursed be the morowe
That thou in thy yerde flewe from ꝑ bemes
Thou were ful wel warned by thy dremes
That ilke day was perylous to the
But what ꝑ god afore wote, must nedes be
After the opinion of certayne clerkes
Witnesse of hym, that any clerke is
That in scole is great altercacyon
In thys matter, and great disputacion
And hath ben, of an hundred thousande men
But I ne can nat bolte it to the bren
As can the holy doctour saynt Austyn
Or Boece, or the bysshop Bradwardyn
Whether that goddes worthy forewetyng
Straineth me nedely to do a thyng
(Nedely clepe I symple necessyte)
Or if the free choyce be graunted me
To do the same thyng, or do it nought
Though god forewote it, or it was wrought
Or of his weping straineth neuer a dele
But by necessite condicionele
I wol not haue to done of suche matere
My tale is of a cocke, as ye shal here
That toke his counsayle of his wife vb sorowe
To walke in the yerde vpon the morowe
That he had met the dreme, as I you tolde
Womens counsayles ben ofte ful colde
Womens counsayle brought vs first to wo
And made Adame fro paradyse to go
There as he was ful mery, and wel at ease
But for I not, whom I myght displease
If I counsayle of wemen woulde blame
Passe ouer, I sayd it in my game (tere
Rede ye authors, wher they trete of such ma-
And what they say of women, ye mowe here
These ben the cockes wordes, and not myne
I can of women no harme deuyne.
A fayre in the sonde, to bathe her merely
Lyeth Pertelot, and al her sustres by
Ayenst the sonne, and Chaunteclere so fre
Songe meryer, than the Mermayde in the se
For Philisologus sayde hytterly
How that they syngen wel and merely
And so befyll as he caste his eye
Amonge the wortes on a butterflye
He was ware of the fore that lay ful lowe
Nothyng than lyst him for to crowe
But cried corke corke, and vp he sterte
As one that was affrayde in his herte
For naturally, bestes desireth to flye
Fro her contrarye, if he may it se
Tho he neuer erst had seen it with his eye.
This Chaunteclere, when he gan him espye
He wolde haue fledde, but the fore anone
Sayd gentel sir, alas: what wol ye done?
Be ye affrayde of me, that am your frende?
Nowe certes: I were worse than a fende
If I to you woulde harme, or vylany
I am not come youre counsayle to espye
But trewely the cause of my commynge
Was onely to here howe ye synge
For sothly ye haue as mery a steuen

As any angel hath, that is in heuen
Therwith ye gaue of mannes mete and drynke
Than had Boece, or any that can synge
Wy lordes your fader, god his soule blesse
And eke your moder, of her gentilnesse
Haue in my house ben, to my great ease
And certes sir, full fayne wolde I you please.
But for men speken of syngyng, I wol fey
Al-moste I broken wel myn eyen twey
Saue you, ne herde I neuer man so synge
As dyd your fader in the morwynge
Certes it was of herte, al that he songe
And for to make his voyce more stronge
He wolde so payne hym, that with both his eyen
He muste wynke, so loude he must cryen
And stonden on his cyptors ther with-all
And stretche forth his necke, longe and small
And eke he was of swiche discrecion
That there was no man in no region
That him in songe or wisdome might passe
I haue wel redde dan Burnel the asse
Among his verses, how that there was a cocke
For that a preestes sonne yaue hym a knocke
Upon his legges, whyle he was yonge and nice
He made him for to lese his benefice
But certayne there is no comparison
Betwixt the wisdom and discrecion
Of your fader, and of hys subtylte
Now singeth sir, for saint charite
Let se, can ye your fader counterfete.
This Chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete
As a man that couldē not his treson aspye
So was he ravished with his flaterye
Alas ye lordes, many a false flatour
Is in your courte, and many a false lesingour
That plesen you wel more, by my fayth
Than he that soth-fastnesse vnto you sayth
Redeth Ecclesiast of flaterye
Beware ye lordes of her trecherye.
This Chaunteclere stode hye vpon his toos
Strecchyng his necke, and held his eyen cloos
And gan to crowe loude for the nones
And dan Russel the foxe starte vp at ones
And by the gorget hent Chaunteclere
And on his backe, toward the wode him bere
For yet was there no man that him sued
O destyne, that maiste not be eschued
Alas that Chaunteclere flewe fro the bemes
Alas his wife roughte not of dremes
And on a friday fyll al thys mischaunce
O Venus that art goddesse of plesaunce
Sithen that thy seruaunt was this chaunteclere
And in thy seruyce dyd al his powere
More for delyte, than the world to multiplye
Why wolde it thē thy gentil herte spille
Alas his wife ne roughte not a whille
O Geffride, dere maister soueraygne
That whā that worthy kyng Richard was slayne
With hors, complayne dest his deth so sore
Why ne had I now thy sentence and thy lore
The friday for to chyde, as dyd ye
For on a friday, sothly slayne was he
Thā wold I shew you how that I could playne
For Chaunteclers drede, and for his payne.
Certes such cry ne lamentacion
Was neuer of ladyes made, whan that Ilion
Was won, and Pirrus with his dyrke swerde
Whan he hent king Priam by the berde
And slough him (as saythe Eneidos)
As made al the hennes in the cloos
Whan they had lost of Chaunteclere the syght
But souerainly dame Pertelote shryght
Wel louder than dyd Hasdrubales wife
Whan that her housbonde had lost his lyfe
And that the Romayns had brent Carthage
She was so ful of torment and of rage
That wilfully in to the fyre she sterte
And brent her selfe, with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so cryed ye
As whan that Nero brent the cyte
Of Rome, cryed the senatours wyues
For that her husbondes shuld lese her lyues
Withoute gylte Nero hath hem slayne
Now turne I turne to my tale ageyne.
The sely wydowe, and her doughters two
Herde the hennes crye and make wo
And out at the dore sterte they anon
And sawe the foxe toward the wodde gon
And bare vpon his backe the cocke away
And cried out harow and well away
Ha the foxe, and after him they ran
And eke with staues, many a mother man
Ran Colle our dogge, Talbot, and eke Garlonde
And Malkyn, with her dystaffe in her honde
Ran cowe and calfe, and eke the very hogges
For they so sore a ferde were of the doggis
And shoutyng of men, and of wommen eke
They ran so, her hert thought to breke
They yelleden as fendes do in hell
The dukes cried as men would hem quell
The geese for feare flewe ouer the trees
Out of the hyues came the swarme of bees
So hydous was the noyse, a benedicite
Certes Jacke Strawe, ne his meyne
Ne made neuer shoutes half so shrill
Whan that they wold any Flemmyng kyll
As that day was made vpon the foxe

Of hasse they blewe the trompes & of boxe
Of bone & bone, of which they blew & pouped
And therwith they shryked and houted
It semed, as though heuen should fall
Now good men I pray you herken all.
Lo how fortune turneth sodainly
The hope and the pryde of her enemy
This cocke that lay vpon the foxes backe
In al his drede, unto the foxe he spake
And said, sir: if I were as ye
Yet should I say, as wyse god helpe me
Turneth ayen, ye proude churles all
A very pestilence vpon you fall
Now am I come unto this woodes syde.
Maugre your heed, the cocke shal here abyde
I wol him ete in fayth, and that anone
The foxe answerd, in faith it shal be done
And as he spake the worde, all sodainly
This cocke brake from his mouthe deliverly
And highe vpon a tre he flewe anon
And when the foxe sawe that he was gon
Alas (quod he) o Chauntecleere alas
I have (quod he) do to you trespas
In as moche as I made you aferde
Whi I you hent, & brought out of your yerde
But sir, I dyd it not in no wicked entent
Come down, & I shal tel you what I ment
I shal you say sothe, god helpe me so.
Nay than (quod he) I shrewe us both two
And first I shrewe my self, both blode & bones
If thou begyle me ofter than ones
Thou shalte no more with thy flatterye
Do me synge with a winkyng eye
For he that winketh, when he shulde se
Al wilfully, god let him never the.
Nay (quod ỹ foxe) but god yeue him mischance
That is so indiscrete of gouernaunce
That iapeth, when that he shulde hold his pees
Lo, suche it is for to be recheles
And negligent, and truste on flatterye
But ye that holde this tale a lye
As of a foxe, of a cocke, and of a hen
Taketh the moralyte good men
For saynt Poule sayth, al that written is
To our doctrine it is written iwys
Taketh the frute, and let the chaffe be styll
Now good god, if that it be thy wyll
As sayth my lorde, so make us al good men
And bring us to thy hygh blysse. Amen.

Here endeth the tale of the Nonnes preest, and here folowerh the Manciples prologue.

SIr Nonnes preest, our hoste sayd anone
Yblessed be thy brech & every stone
This was a mery tale of Chauntecler
But by my trouthe, if thou were seculer
Thou woldest be a rechoule a ryght
For if thou have corage as thou hast might
Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene
Ye more than seuen tymes seuentene
See whiche brawnes hath this gentil preest
So great a necke, and suche a large breest
He loketh as a sparhauke with his eyen
Him nedeth not his colours for to dyen
With brasyl, ne with graine of Portyngale
But sir, fayre fall you for your tale
And after that, he with ful mery chere
Sayd to a nother man, as ye shall here.
Wote ye not where standeth a lytell towne
Which that is called Bob up and downe
Under the blee, in Caunterbury way
There gan our hoste to iape and to play
And sayd, sirs: what dunne is in the myre
Is there no man, for prayer ne for hyre
That woll awake our felow behynde
A theefe him might ful lyghtly robbe & bynde
See howe he nappeth, se for cockes bones
Howe he wol fal from his horse at ones
Is that a coke of London, with mischaunce
Do him comforte, he knoweth his penaunce
For he shal tel a tale by my fey
Although it be not worthe a botel of hey
Awake thou coke (quod he) god yeue the sorow
What eyleth the to slepe by the morow
Hast thou had fleen al nyght, or art ỹ dronke
Or hast ỹ al night with some queen iswonke
So that thou mayste not holde up thyne heed
This coke ỹ was ful pale, & nothyng reed
Said, sir host: so god my soule blesse
There is fal on me great heuynesse
But I not why, me were leuer to slepe
Than the best gallon of wyne in chepe.
Wel (quod the Manciple) if it may do ese
To the sir coke, and to no wight displese
Which that here ride in this companye
And that our hoste wyll of his curtesye
I woll as nowe excuse the of thy tale
For in good faith thy visage is ful pale
Thyne eyen base, lothely as me thinketh
And wel I wote, thy breth ful sowre stynketh
That sheweth wel thou art not well disposed
Of me certayne thou shalt not be glosed

Se howe he gaspeth, lo this dronken wighte
As though he wold vs swalowe anon ryghte
Holde close thy mouthe, by thy father kyn
The dyuel of hel set his foote therin
Thy cursed breethe wyl enfecte vs all
Fye stynking swyne, fye foule mote the befall
Taketh hede sirs of this lusty man
Nowe swete sir, wol ye iuste at the ban
Therto me thinketh ye be well shape
I trowe that ye haue dronken wyne ape
And that is when men play at strawe.
And with his speche the coke waxed al wrawe
And on the manciple he gan to nodde fast
For lacke of speche is down his horse him cast
Where as he lay, tyl that men him vp toke
This was a fatte chenesaunce of a coke
Alas that he ne had holde him by his ladyll
And er that he ayen were in the sadyll
There was a great shouyng to and fro
To lyfte him vp, and moche care and wo
So vnwieldy was this fryl palled goste
And to the manciple than spake our hoste.
Cbycause that drinke hath dominacion
Upon this man, by my saluacion
I trow lyterly wol he tell his tale
For were it wyne, or olde moysty ale
That he hath dronke, he speketh so in the nose
And stynketh fast, and eke hath the pose
He also hath to do more than ynough
To kepe him on his caple out of the slough
And if he fall from his caple ere sone
Than shal we al haue ynough to done
In lyftyng vp his dronken corse
Tell on thy tale, of him make I no force
But yet Manciple, in faith thou art to nyce
Thus openly to repreue him of his vyce
Another day he wol paraventure
Reclayme the, and bring the to lure
I mene he speke wyl of smale thynges
And for to pryche at thy rechenynges
That were not honest, if it came to preue.
No (qõ the mãciple) ꝑ were a grete mischefe
So myght he bringe me in to the mysse
Yet had I leuer paye for the messe
Which he rideth on, thã he should vb me shryue
I wol not wrathe him, so mote I thryue
That I spake, I said it but in bourde
And wote ye what, I haue here in my gourde
A draught of wyne, ye of a ryse grape
And right anon ye shall se a good iape
This coke shal drinke therof, if I maye
For pleyne of my lyfe he wol not say naye
And certainly, to tellen as it was
Of this beffell the coke dranke fast, alas
What nedeth it, he dranke ynough before
And whan he had pouped in his horne
To the Manciple he toke the gourde agayn
And of the drinke the coke was ful fayne
And thonked him, in suche wise as he coude
Than gan our hoste to langh wonder loude
And sayd: I se wel it is necessary
Where ꝑ we gone, good drinke vb vs to cary
For that wil turne rancoure and disese
To accorde ꝑ loue, and many a wronge to pese
O Bacchus, yblessed be thy holy name
That so canste turne ernest in to game
Worshyp and thonke be to thy deite
Of that matere ye get no more of me.
Tel on thy tale thou Manciple, I the pray
Wel sir (qõ he) herkeneth what I say.

Here endeth the Manciples ꝓlogue, and here folowerh his tale.

Whan Phebus dwelled here in erth aboun
As olde bokes make mencioun
He was the moste lusty bacheler
Of al the world, and eke the best archer
He slough Pheton the serpent, as he lay
Slepyng ayenst the sonne vpon a day
And many a nother noble worthy dede
He vb his bowe wrought, as men mowe rede
Play he could on every mynstralcye
And synge, that it was a melodye
To here of his clere voyce the soun
Certes the kynge of Thebes, Amphion
That with his songe, walled the cyte
Coude neuer synge half so wel as he
Therto he was the semelyst man
That is or was, sythe the world began
What nedeth it his feture to discryue
For in this world nas none so fayre a lyue
He was therwith fulfylled of gentylnesse
Of honoure, and of perfyte worthynesse
This Phebus, ꝑ was floure of bachelerye
As wel in fredome, as in chyualrye
For his disporte, in signe eke of victory
Of Pheton, so astelleth vs the story
Was wonte to bere in his honde a bowe
Now had this Phebus in his house a crowe
Within a cage ifostred many a daye

And

And taught it speche, as men teche a laye
Whyte was this crowe, as is a whyte swan
And counterfete the speche of every man
He coulde, whan he shulde tel a tale
Ther was in al this worlde no nyghtyngale
He could, by an hundred thousande dele
Synge so wonderly merry and wele
Now had this Phebus in his house a wife
Which that he loued more than his lyfe
And nyght and day, did euer his dilygence
Her for to plese, and do her reuerence
Save onely, if I the sothe shal sayne
Jelous he was, & wold haue kept her fayne
For him were lothe, iaped for to be
And so is euery wight, in suche degre
But all for nought, for it auayleth nought
A good wife, that is clene of werke & thought
Shulde not be kept, in none swayte certayne
And truely the labour is in vayne
To kepe a shrewe, for it wol not be
This holde I for a very nycete
To spyl labour, for to kepe wyues
Thus writen olde clerkes in her lyues
But now to purpose, as I fyrst began
This worthy Phebus, doth al that he can
To please her, weninge through such plesaunce
And for his manhode, & for his gouernaunce
That no man shulde put him from her grace
But god it wote, there may no man enbrace
As to distrayne a thyng, which tha. ..ature
Hath naturally set in a creature
Take any byrde, and put him a in cage
And do al thyn entent, and thy corage
To foster it tenderly with meate and drinke
Of al daynties that thou canste bethynke
And kepe it also cleanly as thou may
Although the cage of golde be neuer so gay
Yet had this byrd, by tweney thousand folde
Leuer in a forest, that is wyde and colde
Go ete wormes, and suche wretchednesse
For euer this birde wil do his besynesse
To escape out of his cage, whan he maye
His lyberte the birde desyreth aye.
Let take a catte, & foster her with mylke
And tender flesshe, & make her couche of sylke
And let her se a mouse go by the wall
Anon she weyueth flesshe, & couche, and all
And euery deyntie, that is in that house
Suche appetyte hath she to ete the mouse
Lo here hath lust his dominacion
And appetyte fleemeth discrecion.
I she wolfe, hath also a vyanous kynde
The leudest wolfe that she may fynde
Or lest of reputacion, that woll she take
In tyme whan her lust to haue a make
Al these ensamples speke I by these men
That ben vntrue, & no thyng by women
For men haue euer a lycorous appetyte
On lower thyng, to performe her delyte
Than on her wyues, be they neuer so fayre
Ne neuer so trewe, ne so debonayre
Flesshe is so newefangel, with mischaunce
That we ne conin no thyng haue plesaunce
That sowneth vnto vertue, any whyle.
¶ This Phebus, whiche thought no gyle
Discryued was, for al his iolyte
For vnder him an other had she
A man of lytel reputacion
Nought worth to Phebus, in comparyson
The more harme is, it happeth ofte so
Of which there cometh moch harme, & wo
And so befell, whan Phebus was absent
His wyfe anon hath for her lemman sent
Her lemman, certes that is a knauysshe speche
Forgeue it me, and that I you beseche.
¶ The wyse Plato sayth, as ye mowe rede
The worde must nedes acorde with the dede
If men shuld tel properly a thyng
The worde must cosyn be to the werkyng
I am a boystouse man, right thus say I
There is but lytel difference truely
Betwyxt a wyfe, that is of hye degre
If of her body dishonest she be
And a pore wenche, other than this
If it so be they werke both amys
But for the gentyl is in estate aboue
She shalbe called his lady and his loue
And for that tother is a poore woman
She shalbe called his wenche, or his lemman
And god it wote, myn owne dere brother
Men lay as lowe that one as that other
Right so betwyxt a tytelesse tyraunt
And an outlawe, or a thefe erraunt
The same I say, there is no difference
To Alysaunder was tolde this sentence
That for the tyraunt is of greater might
By force of meyne, to slee downe right
And brenne house & home, and make al playn
Lo therfore is he called a capitayn
And for the outlawe hathe but smal meyne
And may not do so great an harme, as he
Ne bringe a countrey to so great mischefe
Men callen him an outlawe or a thefe.
¶ But for I am a man not vertuous
I woll not tell of vertues neuer a dele
I woll go to my tale, as I began.

Whan Phebus wife had sent for her lemman
Anon they wrought al their wille volage
This white crowe, that hynge ave in the cage
Beheld their werke, and sayd never a worde
And whan home was come Phebus ỳ lorde
This crowe songe, cuckow, cuckow, cuckow
What bird (qõ Phebus) what syngest thou
Ne were thou not wont so merily to syng
That to my herte it was reioysyng
To here thy voyce, alas, what song is this?
(Wy god (qõ he) I synge not amys
Phebus (qõ he) for al thy worthynesse
For al thy beaute, and thy gentylnesse
For al thy songe, and thy minstralsye
For al thy waytynge, bicred is thyn eye
With one of lytel reputacyon
Not worth to the in comparyson
The mountenace of a gnat, so mote I thryue
For on thy bed, thy wife I sawe him swyue
What wol you more ỳ crow anon him told
By sad tokens, and by wordes bold
How that his wyfe had done her lechery
Him to great shame, and to great vylany
And tolde him eft, he saw it with his eyen
(This Phebus gã awaywarde for to pyen
Him thought his wofull herte brast a two
His bow he bent, and set therin a flo
And in his yre he hath his wyfe slayne
This is the effecte, there is no more to sayne
For sorow whereof he brake his minstralsye
Both harpe and lute, getern, and sautrye
And eke he brake his arowes, and his bowe
And after that, thus spake he to the crowe.
(Traytour (qõ he) with tonge of scorpion
Thou hast me brought to my confusyon
Alas ỳ I was wrought, why nere I dede
O dere wyfe, o gemme, o lusty heed
That were to me so sad, and eke so trewe
How lyest thou deed, with face pale of hewe
Ful gyltelesse, that durst I swere iwys
O rakell honde, to do so foule amys
O troubled wit, o yre recheleesse
That unavysed smyteth gyltelesse
O wantrust, ful of false suspection
Where was thy wyt and thy discretion
Oh, every man beware of rekylnesse
Ne trow no thyng, without stronge witnesse
Smyte not to sone, or thou wete why
And be avysed wel and sykerly
Or ye do any execution
Upon your yre, for suspicion
Alas, a thousande folke hath rekel yre
Fully for done, and brought hem in the myre
Alas for sorow I wol my selfe slee
And to the crowe, o false theef said he
I wol quite anon thy false tale
Thou songe whilom, lyke a nightingale
Now shalt thou false theef, thy song forgon
And eke thy whyte fethers every chone
Ne never in al thy lyfe shalte thou speke
Thus shul men on a traytour be awreke
Thou and thyn ofspring ever shal be blake
Ne never swete noyse shal ye make
But ever crye ayenst tempest and rayne
In token, that through the my wyfe is slayne
And to the crowe he stert, and that anon
And pulled of his whyte fethers every chon
And made him blacke, and reft him al his song
And eke his speche, and out at doze him slong
Unto the dyuel, wbiche I him betake
And for this cause ben al crowes blake.
(Lordinges, by this ensãple I wol you pray
Beware, and take kepe what I say
Ne telleth never no man in your lyfe
How that an other man hath lyghte his wyfe
He wol you hate mortally certayne
Dan Salomon, as wise clerkes sayne
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge well
But as I sayd, I am not fetherell
But nathelesse, thus taught me my dame
My sonne thinke on ỳ crowe a goddes name
My son kepe wel thy tonge, and kepe thy frende
A wycked tonge is worse than a fende
My sonne from a fende men may them bisette
My sonne, god of his endelesse goodnesse
Walled a tonge with teethe, and lyppes eke
For man shulde him avyse what he speke
My sonne, ful ofte for to much speche
Hath many a man be spylte, as clerkes teche
But for lytle speche, spoken avysedly
Is no man shente, to speke generally
My sonne, thy tonge shuldest thou restrayne
At al tymes, but whan thou doest thy payne
To speke of god, in honour and prayere
The first vertue sonne, if thou wolt lere
Is to restrayne, and kepe wel thy tonge
Thus lerne children, whan they be yonge
My sonne, of muche spekyng unavysed
(There wille speckyng had ynough suffysed)
Cometh muche harme, thus was me taught
In moche speche, synne wanteth naught
Wostow wherefore a rakel tonge serveth
Right as a swerd forcutteth and forkerveth
An arme or two, my dere sonne right so
A tonge cutteth frendshyp al a two
A iangler is to god abhominable

Bede

gete Salomon, so wise and honourable,
gete Dauid in his psalmes, gete Seneke
thy tonge spake not, ne with thy herd be thy
wymmle as þ were bete, if þ thou here
the iangloure speken of perilous matere.
The kynge sayth, lerne eke that thou leste
that yeteł iangling causeth moche reste
thy seruice, eke þ no wicked wynde hast sayde
the hare not drede for to be bewrayde
for he that hath mysayd, I dare well sayne
he may by no way clepe his worde agayne
eyther that is said, is said, & forth it gothe
though him repent, or him be neuer so lothe
he is thral to him, to whom he hath sayde
I tale, for which he is now yuel apayde
thy tonge be ware, & be nere auctour newe
of tydynges, whether they be false or trewe
where so thou come, amonge hye or lowe
kepe wel thy tonge, & thynke on the crowe

Here endeth the Manciples tale, and here begynneth the Plowmans Prologue.

THe ploweman pinched by his plowe
whan mydsomer mone was comen in
And said his beestes should eate ynowe
And lige in the grasse vp to the chin
They ben feble both oxe and cowe
Of hem nys left but bone and skynne
He shoke of herte and coultre of hawe
And bonged his harnys on a pynne

He toke his tabarde and his staffe eke
And on his heed he set his hat
And said he wolde fayre Thomas seke
On pylgremage he goth forth plat
In scrippe he bare both breed and leke
He was forwonke and all forswat
Men myght sene through both his cheke
And euery thyng eyth and where it sat

Our host beheld wel al about
And said this man doth sumne thynne
He knew wel by his lenged snoute
And by his clothes that were to rent
He was a man wonte to walke about
He nas not alway in doctrine pyent
He couthe not reuerently ne lout
And therfore was he fully shent.

Our host him ayed, what man art thou
Sir (quod he) I am ful hyne
For I am wont to gete the plow
And erne my meate yer that I dyne
To swette and swinke I make auowe
My wyfe and children therwith to fynde
And serue god and I wist howe
But we lewde men bene ful blynde.

For clerkes say we shullen be fayne
For her lyuelod swette and swynke
And they right nought vs gyue agayne
Neither to eate ne yet to drynke
They mowe by lawe, as they sayne
Vs curse and dampne to hell dynke
Thus they putten vs to payne
With candles queynt and belles clynke

They make vs thralles at her lust
And sayne we mowen not els be saued
They haue the corne and we the dust
Who speketh there agayne they say he raued
What man (quod our host) canst thou preache
Come nere and tel vs some holy thynge
Sir quod he, I herde ones teache
A preest in pulpyt a good prechynge.

Say on quod our host, I the beseche
Yet I am redy at your byddyng
I praye you that no man me reproche
Whyle that I am my tale telling.

Thus endeth the prologue, and here folowyth the fyfth parte of the tale.

AGreme strife is sterred newe
In manye stedes in a stounde
Of sondry sedes that be sewe
It semeth that some ben vnsounde
For some be great growen vngrounde
Somehene double, symple and small
Whether of hem is falser founde
The falser foule mote him befall

That one syde is that I of tell
Popes, Cardynals and Prelates
Parsons, Monkes, and Freers fell
Priours, Abbottes of greate estates
Of heuyn and hell they kepe the yeates

And godlesse fastyng slepyng dronken hed
This is brewed by olde lorers
But falshed foule mought hym befall
The water fyre ben peuyse and pale
And people put out of possession
And seme cayserers cope & cale
And euer in drede to lyuyne encrease
I serpeth lollers and londlese
Who so eth on them they wene wreall
They ben arayed al for the peace
But falshed foule more it befall.

Many a countrey haue I sought
To knowe the falser of these two
But euer my trauayle was for nought
Al so ferre as I haue go
But as I wandred in a wyo
In a wodde beside a wall
Two fowles fuwe I fyr tho
The falser foule more hym befall

That one dyd pleye on the popes fyde
A gryffon of a grymme stature
A pellycane without pryde
To these lollers layde his lure
He mused his matter in measure
To comforte Christ euer gan he call
The gryffon shrewed as sharpe as fyre
But falshed foule more it befall.

The pellycane began to preache
Vorthe of mercy and of rightwisnesse
And sayde that Christ so gan vs teache
And meke and mercyable gan bidde
The Euangely bearerly witnesse
A lambe he lyketh Christ ouer all
In token that he meked was
With pride was out of heuen fall.

And so shoulde euery Christened be
Preestes, peters successours
Both lowlyche and of lowe degree
And hateden erthly honours
Neither frowarde, ne lurkous coueytous
Ne pyllours, ne other pleasours pall
Ne nought ete to excess by great creatures
For falshed foule more it befall.

Preestes shoulde for no estrell plede
But chasten hem in charyte
Ne to no bataile shoulde men lede
For impayrynge of her awne degree
And wyues marriages in bye tre
Myght neuer to youre ne pall
All adultery worshyppe betre and tre
For who so wyl here yuyknes foule hym fall.

Who may lache lawnces call
That wyl here lyuelode truely wynne
Aboute his Lemmere fuche shall fall
In balefull bachepefe tourybel bet bonne
That eggeth the people to erroure
And maketh them to hem enpall
To Christ I holde fuche enemyes come
Ye lowe as Lucifer farhe one shall fall

That wilneth to be bysshoppes peeres
And highest than the Emperour
Some that were bot poore freres
Nowe wollen wage a warryour
God is not her gouernour
That holdeth no maner penaunce
Whyle coueytise is her counsayllour
Al fuche falshed more nede fal

That hye on hoyse wyl ryde
In gliterande golde of great araye
I payned and poynted all in pryde
As comen knyght may go to gaye
Chaunge of clothyng euery daye
With golden gyrdels great and small
As bossyons as is bere at baye
Al fuche falshed more nede fall.

With pride punished the poore
And so do they fullayne with fale
Of holy churche maketh an hore
And fylleth her wombe with wrong gode ale
With wodnesse fyllen many a male
And chasteen chastetes where they fall
And fetteth the people a fole tale
Suche false fayrynes foule hem fall

With chaunge of many maner meates
Both longe and sodde fyrying longe
And fylleth her wombe, and fall feeres
And from the meate to the gonge
And after meate wolde harpe and daunce
And erly man may be a lyther fall
And bote sprees euer amonge
Suche falle fayrynes foule hem fall.

And myrres me that one of tho
I peried as the quenes heed
I staffe of golde, and pryer lo

Where all it were made of lead
With stones of golde bothe newe and redde
With glyterande golde as great as gall
My lorde hath made mewed dead
All suche faytours foule hem fall.

Thus Chrystes people poudely turne
With blode bost, and blaynge bell
To putte pennyes in her purse
They wol fill bothe heuen and hell
And in her seruyce and thou wylte dwell
They wyllen gyue the gay hall
And thoughe the solde thou of hem tell
Ja great cat lyng tyall thou fall

That is blessed, that they blesse
And cursed that they curse wolle
And thus the people they oppresse
And haue their lordshippes at full
And many be marchaundes of wolle
And to purs pennyes wol come thyall
The poore people they all to pull
Suche false faytours foule hem fall

Lordes more to hem loute
Obeysaunt to her bydde bidynge
They ryden with her royal route
On a courser as it were a kynge
With sable of golde gay clothynge
With curious barbes quayntly ytaille
Scryppes gaye of golde waxynge
All suche falshed foule hem falle

Christes ministers clepen they bene
And rulen al in redenesse
But Antichriste they seruen clene
Arrayed all in ryalnesse
Witnesse of Johns prophecie
That antichriste is her admirall
Tyrriers arrayed in rychesse
All suche faytours foule hem fall

Who sayth that some of hem may synne
He shalbe dome to be brent
Some of hem wol gladly wynne
All ayenst that whilome god forbed
All boyest they clepen her bred
That of her rule is regall
Alas that euer they eaten bred
For al suche falshed woll foule fall

Her herd loueth all honour
And to be worshypped in worde and debe
Kynges mote to hem knele and coure
To the apostles seruat Christ forbede
To popes heedes suche taketh more hede
Than to kepe Christes commaundement
Of gold and syluer more bethet wede
They holdeth him hole omnipotent

The ordayneth by his ordynaunce
To parishe preestes a powere
To another a greater auaunce
A greater poynt to his mistere
But for he is highest in erth here
To him reserueth he many a point
But to Christ that hath no pere
Reserueth he neyther oppu no loynt

He semeth he aboue all
And Christ aboue him nothinge
Whan he syttethin his stall
Dampneth and saueth as him thynke
Suche pride for god doth stynke
In angel had John to him not knele
But only to god do his bowynge
Such willers of worshyp must nede euill fele

They ne clepen Christ, but sanctus deus
And clepen her bred Sanctissimus
They that suche a secte sewis
I trowe they taken hem amysse
In erth here they haue her blysse
Her hie master is Belyall
Christes people from hem wysse
For al suche falsh wyll foule fall

They mowe both bynde and lose
And all is for her holy lyfe
Do saue or dampne they mowe chose
Betwene hem now is great stryfe
Many a man is kylled with a knyfe
To were which of hem haue lordshyp thank
For suche Christ suffred woundes fyue
For all suche falshed wyll foule fall

Christ said: Qui gladio percutit
With swerde shall dye
He bad his preestes preate and greyth
And bad hem not dzede for to dye
And bad them be both symple and slye
And carke not for no carrett
And trusteth on god that sitteth on hye
For al falsh shall foule fall

These wollen make men to swere

Wyth Christes commaundement
And Christes membres al so trete
Do coude, as he were newe ytrete
Suche lawes they maken by common assent
Ethe an ik chaunty as a bell
Thus the poore be fully shent
But cues falsed soule it befall

¶ They bien no symonye
But sellen churches and yliyyes
As they bien no enuye
But cursen al hem contraryes
And hyzeth men by dayes and yeres
With strength to holde hem in her stall
And cullieth all her aduersaries
Therfoze falsed soule thou fall

¶ With purse they purchase personage
With purse they paynen hem to plede
And men of warre they wol wage
To bringe her enemies to the dede
And lozdes lyues they wol lede
And muche take, and gyue but small
But be it so get, from it shal shede
And make suche false right soule fall

¶ They halowe nothyng but foz hyre
Churche, sout, ne vestement
And make ozders in euery shyre
But yziestes pay foz the parchement
Of tyratours they taken rent
Therwith they finere the shepes shall
Foz many churches ben ofte suspent
And al suche falsed yet soule it fall

¶ Some lyueth not in lecherye
But haunten wenches, wydowes, & wines
And punisheth the poore foz pouere
Them selfe it bleth al their lyues
And but a man to them shryues
To hepen come he neuer shall
He shal be cursed as he caytyues
To hell they sayne that he shal fall

¶ There was moze mercy in Marimpen
And in Acco, that neuer was good
Than is nowe in tome of them
Wham he hath endys furred hoode
They folowe Christ that shede his bloode
To heuen, as buckette in to the wall
Suche wzeches ben wozse than woode
And al suche tayteurs soule hem fall

¶ They gyue her tithes to the ryche
To marmysetes, and to men of lawe
Foz to lozdes they wol be lyche
In harlotes tonge nat lowtche an hawe
Nothalmesse suche ben sawe
They kembe her crokettes with christall
And shepe of gold they bere bowne brawne
Al suche fayteurs soule hem fall

¶ They maken parsons foz the penyge
And canons of her Cardynals
Wemethes amongest hem al ony
That he ne hath grafed the gospel fals
Foz Christe made neuer no carpe hys
Ne with him was no cardynall
With a redde hatte as bien minstrals
But falsed soule moste it befall

¶ Their tythyng, and her offryng bothe
They clemeth it by possession
Therof nyll they none forgo
But robben men as raunsome
The tythynge of Turpe lucrum
With these maisters is meynall
Tythynge of bzidze, and lazson
Wyl make falsed full soule to fall

¶ They taken to ferme her sompnours
To harme the people what they may
To pardoners, and false fayteurs
Sell her si.. es I dare well saye
And al to holden great arraye
To multyply hem more metall
They dyede ful lyte domes day
Wham al suche shal soule fall

Suche harlottes shul men diffiaunder
Foz they shulden make hem gree
And ben as proude as Alexander
And sayne to the poope, wo be ye
By yere eche pied shal paye hys fee
To encreace hys lemmans call
Suche heretikes shul men purl the
And al suche false shul soule fall

And yf a man be falsely famed
And wol make purgacioun
Than wol the officers be agramed
And assigne hym fro towne to towne
So nede he muste pay raunsome
Though he be clene, as is christall
And than haue an absolucion
But al suche false shul soule fall

¶ Though he be gylty of the dede
And that he may money pay
Ache whyle hys purse wol blede
He may vse it fro day to day
These bishopes officers gone ful gay
And thys game they vsen ouer all
The poore to pyl is al their praye
Al suche false shull foule fall

¶ Alas, god ordayned neuer suche lawe
Ne no suche craftes of couetyse
He forbad it by his lawe
Such gouernours mowen of god agryse
For al his rules is ryght wyse
These newe poyntes ben pure papall
And godds lawe they dispice
And al suche fayrours shul foule fall.

¶ They sayne that Peter had the key
Of heuyn and hel, to haue and holde
I trowe Peter toke no money
For no synnes that he solde
Suche successours ben to bolde
To wynning al their wytte they wyrall
Her conscience is waxen colde
And al suche fayrours foule hem fal.

¶ Peter was neuer so great a fole
To leaue hys key with suche a losell
Or to take suche cursed suche a tole
He was adwysed nothyng wel
I trowe they haue the key of hell
Their mayster is of that place marshall
For there they dresse hem to dwell
And with false Lucifer there to fall.

¶ They ben as proude as Lucyfarre
As angry, and as enuyous
From good fayth they ben ful farre
Into couetyse they ben curyous
To catche catel as coueytous
As hounde, that for hunger wol yall
Ungodly, and vngracious
And nedely suche falshed shal foule fall.

¶ The Pope and he were Peters heyre
Me thynke he erreth in thys case
Whan chose of bysshops is in dispayre
To chosen hem in dyuers place
A lorde shall wryte to hym for grace
For his clerke anone pray he shall
So shal he spede hys purchase
And al suche false foule hem fall.

¶ Though he can no more good
A lordes prayer shalbe spedde
Though he be wylde of wyt or wood
Nat vnderstanding what men han redde
A leude boster, and that god forbedde
As good a bishoppe is my horse tail
Suche a Pope is foule besedde
And at laste wol foule fal.

¶ He maketh bysshops for erthlye thanke
And nothing for Christes sake
Suche that ben ful fare and ranke
To soule heale none hede they take
Al is wel done what euer they make
For they shal answerre at ones for all
For worldes thanke, suche worch and wake
And al suche false shal foule fall.

¶ Suche that can nat her Crede
With prayer shul be made prelates
Nother canne the gospell rede
Suche shull nowe welde hye estates
The hye goddes frendshyp hem makes
They toteth on her summe total
Suche bere the keyes of helyates
And suche false shall foule fall

¶ They forsake for Christes loue
Trauayle, hungre, thurst, and colde
For they ben ordred ouer al aboue
Out of youthe tyll they ben olde
By the dore they go, nat in to the folde
To helpe their shepe they nought trauall
Hyred men all suche I holde
And al suche false foule hem fall

¶ For Christ our kyng they wol forsake
And knowe him nought for hys powerte
For Christes loue they wol wake
And drynke pyrement ale aparte
Of god they seme nothyng a ferde
As lusty lyueth, as dyd Lamuall
And dryuen her shepe in to desert
Al suche fayrours shul foule fall.

¶ Christ hath .xii. Apostels here
Nowe say they, there may be but one
That may not erre inno manere
Who leueth not this ben lolle echone
Peter erred, so dyd not John
Why is he cleped the principall
Christe cleped hym Peter, but hym lesse the
Al false fayrours foule hem fall. (lone

Why

¶ Why curten they the croftery
Chriſtes chriſten creatures
For bytwene hem is now enuy
To be enhaunſed in honours
And Chriſten iuuers with her labours
For they leuyn on no man mortall
But do to deth with diſhonours
And al ſuche falſe foule hem fall

¶ What knoweth a tylloure at the plowe
The popes name, and what he hate
Hys crede ſuffiſeth to him ynowe
And knoweth a cardynall by his hatte
Noughis the pooze vnrightly latte
That knoweth Chriſt hys god royall
Suche matters be not wozth a gnatte
But ſuche falſe faytours foule hem fall

A kyng ſhal knele and kyſſe his ſhowe
Chriſt ſuffered a ſynful to kyſſe hys fete
Me thynketh he holdeth him hye ynowe
So Lucifer did, that hye ſet
Suche one me thynketh hym ſelfe forget
Eyther to the trouth he was nat call
Chriſte that ſuffered woundes were
Shall make ſuche falſhed foule fall

They layeth out her large nettes
For to take ſyluer and golde
Fyllen coffers, and ſackes fettes
There as they ſoules catche ſholde
Her ſeruauntes be to them vnholde
But they can doublyn theyr reneall
To bygge hem caſtles, a bygge hem holde
And all ſuche falſe foule hem fall.

Here endeth the fyrſt part of thys tale and here after foloweth the ſeconde parte.

Accorde vs this wozde fall
No moze Engliſhe can I fynde
Shewe another nowe I ſhall
For I haue moch to ſaye behynde
How prieſtes han the people pynde
As curreys Chriſte hath me kynde
And put thys matter in my mynde
To make thys maner men amende

¶ Shozterly to ſhende hem, and ſhewe more
Howe wrongfully they worche and walke
O hye god, nothyng they tell, ne howe
But in goddes wozde, ſtellerh many a balke
In harnes holde hem and in halke
And preachen of tythes and offrende
And vntrueth of the goſpell talke
For his mercy god it amende

¶ What is Antichriſte to ſaye
But euyn Chriſtes aduerſarye
Suche hath nowe ben many a daye,
To Chriſtes biddyng ful contraye
That from the trueth clene warpy
Out of the way they ben wende
And Chriſtes people vntrueth tary
God for his pitye it amende

¶ They lyuen contrary to Chriſtes lore
In hye pryde agaynſt mekeneſſe
Agaynſt ſuffraunce they bren ſtryfe
And angre ayenſt ſobreneſſe
Agaynſt wiſedome wylfulneſſe
To Chriſtes tales lyttel tende
Agaynſt meaſure outragiouſneſſe
But whan god wol it may amende

¶ Lozdely lyfe ayenſt lowelyneſſe
And demyn all without mercy
And couetiſe ayenſte largeſſe
Agaynſt trewth trechery
And agaynſt almeſſe enuy
Agaynſt Chriſt they comprehende
For chaſtite they maynteyne lechery
God for hys grace this amende

¶ Agaynſt penaunce they bie delyghtes
Agaynſt ſuffraunce ſtronge defence
Ayenſt god they bren euyll ryghtes
Ayenſt pryde pumyſhementes
Open enuy ayenſt contynence
Her wicked wynnyng wozſe diſpende
Sobreneſſe they ſette in to diſpence
But god for his goodneſſe it amende

¶ Why clergmen they holy his powere
And wrangle ayenſt al his beſtes
Hys lyuyng folowe they nothyng here
But lyuen wozſe than wirleſſe beſtes
Of fleſhe and fleſhe they louen freſtes
As lozdes they ben brode yhende
Of goddes pooze they haten geſtes
God for his mercy thys amende

with

with dyuers suche shall haueher dome
That sayne that they be Christes frendes
And do nothyng as they shulde done
Al suche ben falser than ben fendes
Ca the people they ley suche bendes
As god is in erth they han offende
Succour for suche Christe nowe sende hy
And for his mercy thys amende

¶ Token of Antichriste they be
His carectes ben nowe wyde yknowe
Reeryued to preche shall no man be
Without token of hym I trowe
Ethe christen preest, to preche yn owe
From god aboue they ben sende
Goddes worde, to al folke for to showe
Synful man for to amende

¶ Christ sent the poore for to preche
The royal ryche he dyd not so
Nowe dare no poore the people teache
For Antichrist is ouer all her foe
Amonge the people he more go
He hath bidden, al suche suspende
Some hath he hent, and thynketh yet mo
Yet al this god may wel amende

¶ All tho that han the worlde forsake
And lyuen lowly, as god badde
Into her prison shullen be take
Beryn and boynden, and forth ladde
Herof I rede no man be dradde
Christ sayde, hys shulde be shende
Ethe man ought herof be glade
For god ful well it wol amende

¶ They take on hem royall power
And say they haue swerdes two
One curste to hel, one slee men here
For at his takyng Christ had no mo
Yet Peter had of tho
But Christ, to Peter smyte gan defende
And in to the sherth badde put it tho
And al suche mischeues god amende

¶ Christ badde Peter kepe hys shepe
And with his swoorde forbade hym smyte
Swerde is no tole with shepe to kepe
But to sheperdes that shepe wol byte
Me thynketh suche sheperdes ben to wyte
Yen her shepe with swerde that contende
They dryue her shepe with great dispyte
But al this god may wel amende

¶ So successours to Peter be they nought
Whome Christe made these pasture
A swerde no sheperde vsen ought
But he wolde slee, as a bochoure
For who so were Peters successoure
Shulde bere his shepe tyl his backe bende
And shadowe hem from euery shoure
And al this god may wel amende

Successours to Peter ben these
In that, that Peter Christe forsoke
That had leuer the loue of god lese
Than a sheperde had to lese hys hoke
He culleth the shepe as doth the coke
Of hem taken they wol hutrende
And falsely glose the gospell boke
God for his mercy them amende

¶ After Christ had take Peter the kay
Christ sayde, he must dye for man
That Peter to Christ gan withsay
Christe bad hym go behynde sathan
Suche counsaylours many of these men han
For worldes welе, god to offende
Peters successours they ben for than
But al suche god may wel amende

¶ For sathan is to say no more
But he that contrary to Christ is
In this they lerne Peters lore
They sewen hym whan he dyd mysse
They folowe Peter forsoth in this
In al that Christ wolde Peter reprehende
But nat in that, that lõgeth to heuyn blysse
God for his mercy hem amende

¶ Some of the apostels they sewẽ in case
Of ought that I can vnderstonde
Hym that betrayed Christ, Judas
That bare the purse in euery londe
And al that he might sette on honde
He hydde and stale, and mispende
Hys enle these traytours han in honde
Almighty god hem amende

¶ And at the last hys lorde gan tray
Cursedly through hys false couetyse
So wolde these trayne him for money
And they wyllen in what wyse
They be seker of the selfe emprise
From al sothnesse they ben fremde
And couetyse chaungen with queynteyse
Almighty god al suche amende

Where

¶ Were Christ on erth here eft ſone
These worlde hampes him to dyſe
Al his heſtes they han forgone
And ſayne his lawes ben hereſye
And ayenſte his commaundemétes they crye
And dampne al his to be brende
For it lyketh not hem ſuche lyfe to gerye
God almighty hem amende

¶ These han more myght in Englande here
Than hath the kyng and all his lawe
They han purchaſed hem ſuche powere
To taken hem whom lyſt not knawe
And ſay that hereſye is her lawe
And ſo to priſon wol hym ſende
It was not ſo by elder dawe
God for hys mercy it amende

¶ The kynges lawe wol no man deme
Ingerlyche without anſwere
But if any man these miſqueme
He ſhal be bayghetth as a bere
And yet wel worſe they wol hym dere
And in priſon woll hem pende
In gyues, and other gere
Whan god woll, it may amende

¶ The kynge taxeth nat his men
But by aſſent of the commynalte
But these eche yere wol raunſom hem
Mayſterfullye, more than dothe ye
Her ſcales by yere better be
Than is the kynges in extende
Her officers han greater fee
But thys miſchefe god amende

¶ For who ſo wol pcure a teſtament
That is nat all worth tenne pounde
He ſhal paye for the parchement
The thirde of the money all rounde
Thus the people is raunſomde
They ſaye ſuche parte to hem ſhulde apende
There as they geppen it gothe to grounde
God for hys mercye it amende

¶ A ſymple forfaction
Twenty ſhyllynges he ſhall pay
And than haue an abſolucion
And al the yere lyen it forthe he may
Thus they letten hem go a ſtray
They reche nat thoughe the ſoule be brende
These lepen yuel Peters hay
And al ſuche herdes god amende.

¶ Wonder is, that the parlyamente
And all the lordes of thys londe
Here to taken ſo lytel entente
To helpe the people out of her honde
For they ben harder in their bonde
Worſe beate, and better brende
Than to the kyng is vnderſtande
God him helpe this to amende

What biſhoppes, what religions
Han in thys lande as muche fay fee
Lordeſhyppes and poſſeſſyons
More than Lordes, it ſemeth me
That maketh hem leſe charite
They mowe not to god attende
In earth they haue ſo hygge degre
God for hys mercy it amende

The Emperour yaf the pope ſomtyme
So high lordeſhyp hym about
That at laſte the feiy kyme
The proude Pope pute hym out
So of thys realme is in dout
But lordes beware and them defende
For nowe these folke be wonders ſtoute
The kyng and lordes nowe this amende

Thus endeth the ſeconde parte
of thys tale, and hereafter
followeth the thirde.

MAyſters lawe forbode it tho
That preeſtes ſhoulde no lordeſhyppes welde
Chriſtes goſpell byddeth alſo
That they ſhulde no lordſhippes helde
Ne Chriſtes apoſtels were neuer ſo bolde
No ſuche lordeſhyppes to hem embrace
But ſmeren her ſhepe and kepe her folde
God amende hem for his grace

For they ne ben but counterfete
Men may knowe hem by her fruite
Her greteneſſe maketh hem god forgete
And take his meekeneſſe in deſpite
And they were poore and had but lyte
They nolde nat demen after the face
But noryſhe her ſhepe, and hem nat byte
God amende hem for hys grace

Griffon.

What canſt thou preche ayenſt chanons

That

That men clepen benefices
Sell. They ben curates of many townes
Certes they haue great powere
They haue great parsonages and bere
Some two or thre, and some mo
Pardonage to ben a playeng fere
And yet they serue the kynge alle

And let to ferme all that fare
To whom that wol more gyue therfore
Some wol spende, and some woll spare
And some wol laye it vp in store
I care of soule they caren more
Ha they money take
Whether her soules be wone or lore
Her prayers they woll not forsake

They haue a gedering procuratour
That can the poore people emplede
And robben hem as a raymour
All to his lorde they money fede
And catche of quycke and eke of dede
And richen him and his lorde eke
And is robbe the poore can gyue good rede
Olde and yonge, of hole and syke

Therwith they purchase hem lay fee
In londe, where hem lyketh best
And buylde also brode as a tree
Both in the East, and eke in the west
To purchase thus they ben ful prest
But on the poore they woll nought spende
Yet no good gyue to goddes gest
Se sende him some that all hath sende

By her prayer suche wol lyue
And maste that other into tresture
Though all her paryshe dye bidyue
They wol not gyue a rose floure
Her lyfe shulde be as a mirrour
Both to lered and to lewde alle
And teche the people her lele labour
Such miller men ben al myssyde

Some of hem ben harde nyggers
And some of hem ben proude and gay
Some spende her good vpon gyggers
And fynden hem of great aray
Alas, what thynke these men to say
That thus dispenden goddes good
At the dredeful domes daye
Suche werkes shall be wayte than wood

Some her churches neuere ne syke
Ne neuer o penye, thyder vs sende
Though the poore parishens for hunger dye
O peny on hem wyll they not spende
Haue they receyuynge of the tende
They recke neuer of the remenant
Alas, the deuyl hath clene hem blende
Such one is Sathynas seruauntes

And vsen horedome and harlotry
Couetyse, pompe, and pryde
Slouthe, wrathe, and eke envy
And serven syrine by euery syde
Alas, where thynke suche tabyde
Howe wol they accomptes yelde
From hye god they mowe hem not hyde
Suche wyllers wytte is not worth a nelde

They ben so toted in richesse
That Christes power is forget
Serued wyth so many messe
Hem thinketh that Marma is no mete
Al is good that they mowe gete
They were to lyue euermore
But whan god at dome is set
Suche treasour is a feble store

Vmeth more they maryus say
For countryng and courtholdynge
And yet he iangleth as a iaye
And vnderstont him selfe nothyng
Ye wol serue bothe de and kynge
For his fyndyng and his fee
And hyde his tythyng and his offrynge
This is a feble charite

Other they ben proude, or couetous
Or they ben harde, or hungry
Or they ben lyberall or leccherous
Or els mediers with marchandry
Or mayneyners of men with maystry
Or stewardes, countours, or pledours
And serue god in yporysy
Such prestes ben Christes false traytours

They bene false, they ben bengeable
And begilen men in Christes name
They ben vnstedfast and vnstable
To tray her lorde, hem rymeth no shame
To serue god they ben ful lame
Goddes theues, and falsely swere
And falsely goddes worde defame
In wymmynge is her worldes were.

¶ Antichrist there ferme all
I pray the who may say nay
With Antichrist suche shull fall
They folowen hym in dede and lay
They serven hem in riche array
To serue Christ suche falsery fayne
Why, at the dredefull domes day
Shul they not folow him to payne

¶ That knowen hem selfe that they done yll
Ayenst Christes commaundement
And amende hem neuer ne wyll
But serue satan by one assent
Who saith soth he shalbe shent
Or speketh ayenst her falce lyuyng
Who so wel lyueth shalbe dyent
For suche ben greater than the kyng

¶ Pope, Bishopes, and Cardinals
Chanons, Persons, and vycare
In goddes seruice I trowe ben fals
That sacramentes frilen here
And ben as proude as Lucifere
Eche man loke whether that I lye
Who so speketh ayenst her powere
It shal be holden heresye

¶ Loke howe many ordres take
Onely of Christ, for his seruice
That the worldes goodes forsake
Who so taketh ordres, or other wyse
I trowe that they shall sore agryse
For al the glose that they conne
Al sewen not this assyse
In yuel tyme they thus begonne

¶ Loke how many among hem all
Holden not thys hye waye
With Antichriste they shullen fall
For they wollen god betraye
God amende hem that best maye
For many men they maken shende
They weten well the sothe I saye
But the deuyl hath foule hem blende

¶ Some on her churches dwell
Apparailled pozely, proude of pore
The seuen sacramentes they done sell
Intortell catchyng is her comfore
Of eche matter they wollen melle
And done hem wronge is her dyspore
To afray the people they ben fell
And holde hem lower then doth the laythe

¶ For the rythynge of a bucke
Or of an apple, or an aye
They make men swere vpon a boke
Thus they fonden Christes fay
Suche beaten puell drauen day
They mowen alleyse, they mowe shryue
With mens wyues strongly play
With true tyllers stunte and stryue

¶ At the wrestlynge, and at the wake
And eyther chaunsours at the nale
Harderte beasters, and mebyng make
Hoppen and houten with hene and hale
At sayre frethe, and at wyne stale
Dyne and drinke, and make debate
The seuen sacramentes fer at sayle
How kepe suche the kayes of heuen gate

¶ Mens wyues they wollen holde
And though that they ben right sory
To speake they shull not be so bolde
For sompnyng to the consistory
And make hem saye mouth I lye
Though they it sawe with her eye
Hys lemman holden opruly
No man so hardy to aye why

He woll haue rythyng and offeryng
Wanger whosoeuer it grutche
And twyste on the day he wol synge
Goddes prieste neer none suche
He more on huntyng with hogge and biche
And blowen hys horne, and cryen hey
And sotterey dren as a wyrche
Suche keepen yuell Peters key

Yet they mote haue some flocke or stone
Gayle payntrd, and proudely dyght
To maken men lyuen vpon
And say that it is ful of myght
About suche, men ser vp great lyght
Other suche flockes shull stande therby
As darke as it were myd nyght
For it may make no maistry

That it lrude people se mowe
Thou Mary, thou worchest wonder thinges
About that, that men offren to nowe
Hongen brochys, ouches, and rynges
The prieste purchaseth the offryngs
But he wyll offre to none ymage
Wo is the soule that he for synges
That preacheth for suche a pylgrymage

¶ To men and women that ben poze
That ben Chriſtes awne lykeneſſe
Ben ſhullen offre at her doze
That ſuffre hunger and diſtreſſe
And to ſuche ymages offre leſſe
That mowe not fele thurſt ne colde
The poze in ſpirite gan Chriſt bleſſe
Therfoze offreth to feble and olde

¶ Buckelers brode, and ſwerdes longe
Baudryke, with baſelardes kene
Such toles aboute her necke they honge
With Antichriſt ſuche prieſtes bene
Upon her dedes it is well ſene
Whom they ſeruen, whom they honozeth
Antichriſtes they ben clene
And goddes goodes falſly deuouren

¶ Of ſcarlet and grene gay gownes
That mote be ſhape foz the newe
To clyppen and kyſſen countren in townes
The damoſeles that to the daunce lewe
Cutted clothes to ſewe her hewe
With longe pykes on her ſhone
Our goddes goſpel is not trewe
Either they ſeruen the deuil oz none

¶ Now ben prieſtes pokes ſo wyde
That men muſt enlarge the veſtement
The holy goſpel they done hyde
Foz the contraction in rayment
Suche prieſtes of Lucifer ben ſent
Lyke conqueroures they ben arayde
The proude pendaunces at her ars ypent
Falſely the truth they han betrayde

¶ Shrift ſiluer ſuche wollen aſke is
And woll men crepe to the crouche
None of the ſacramentes ſaue aſkes
Without mede ſhal no man touche
Luther Byſhop their warant bouche
Thus is lawe of the decre
With mede and money thus they mouche
And thus they ſayne is charite

¶ In the myddes of her maſſe
They nyl hane no man but foz hyre
And ful thozly let forth paſſe
Such ſhul men fynde in erthe hyre
That perſonages foz profyte deſyre
To lyue in lyking and in luſtes
I dare not ſayne, Sans oſe ieo dyre
That ſuche ben antichriſtes prieſtes

¶ Oz they yek the biſhoppes why
Oz they more ben in his ſeruice
And holden forth her hariotry
Suche prelates ben of feble empryſe
Of goddes grame ſuche men agryſe
Foz ſuche matters that taken mede
Howe they excuſe hem, and in what wyſe
Me thynketh they ought greatly dzede

¶ They ſayne that it to no man longeth
To reprone them though they erre
But falſely goddes goodes they fongeth
And therwith maynteine wo and werre
Her dedes ſhulde be as bright as ſterre
Her liuyng, leude mannes lyght
They ſay the pope may not erre
Nede muſt that paſſe mannes might

Though a prieſt lye wb his lēman all nyght
And tellen his felow, and he him
He goth to maſſe anone right
And ſaiery he ſyngeth out of ſyme
Hys bryde abydeth him at his ynne
And dyghteth hys dyner the meane whyle
He ſyngeth his maſſe foz he wolde wynne
And ſo he weneth god begyle

Hem thynketh longe tyll they be mette
And that they vſen forth all the yere
Among the folke when he is ſette
He holdeth no man halfe his pere
Of the byſhop he hath powere
To ſoyle men, oz elſe they ben loze
His abſolucion may make them ſhere
And wo is the ſoule that he ſingeth foz

The Gryffon began foz to threte
And ſaid, of monkes canſt thou ought
The Pellycan ſayd, they ben ful grete
And in this woꝛld muche wo hath wꝛought
Sayne Benet, that her oꝛder bꝛought
Ne made hem neuer on ſuche maneꝛe
I trowe it came neuer in his thought
That they ſhulde bꝛe ſo great powꝛer

That a man ſhulde a monke loꝛde call
Ne ſeꝛue on kneeꝛs, as a kynge
He is as pꝛoude as pꝛynce in pall
In meate, and dꝛynke, and al thinge
Some weaꝛen myteꝛ and ꝛynge
With doble woꝛſted well ydyght
With royall meate and ryche dꝛynke
And ꝛideth on a couꝛſeꝛ as a knyght

¶ With hauke and with houndes ete
With broches or ouches on his hoode
Some say no masse in all a weke
Of beinties is her most foode
With lordshyppes and with bondmen
This is a royall religion
Saint Benet made neuer none of hem
To haue lordshyp of man ne towne

¶ Now they ben queynte and curious
With fyne clothe clad and serued cleane
Proude, angry, and enuyous
Malyce is muche that they meane
In catchyng crafty and couetous
Lordly lyuen in great lykyng
This liuing is not religious
Accordyng to Benet in his liuinge

They ben clerkes, her courtes they ouer se
Her pore tenaunce fully they syte
The hyer that a man a mercer be
The gladlier they will it write
This is farre from Christes pouerte
For all wyth couetyse they endyte
On the pore they haue no pyte
Ne neuer hem cherysshe but euer him byte

¶ And commenly suche ben comon
Of pore people, and of hem begete
That this perfection han ynomen
Her fathers tyden nat but on her fete
And trauayen sore for that they ete
In pouert lyueth yonge and olde
Her fathers suffreth drought and wete
Many hungry meles, thurst, and colde

¶ And al this the monkes han forsake
For Christes loue and sainte Benette
To pryde and ease haue hem take
This religion is yuell beseate
Had they ben out of religion
They must haue hanged at the plowe
Threshyng a dykinge fro towne to towne
Wyth sory mete, and not halfe ynow

¶ Therfore they han this all forsake
And taken to ryches, pryde, and ease
Ful fewe for god will monkes hem make
Lytel is such order for to prayse
Saynt Benet ordayned it not so
But bad hem be cherelyche
In chirlyche maner lyue and go
Boyleous in earth, and not lordly the

¶ They disclaunder saynt Benette
Therfore they haue his holy curse
Saint Benet with hem neuer mette
But if they thought to robbe his purse
I can no more hereof tell
But they ben lyke tho before
And clene serue the dyuel of hell
And ben his treasure and his store

¶ And al suche other counterfaitours
Chanons, Canons, and suche dysgysed
Ben goddes enemyes and traytours
His true religion han foule dispysed
Of Freres I haue tolde before
In a makyng of a Crede
And yet I coulde tell worse and more
But men wolde werien it to rede

¶ As goddes goodnes no man tell might
Write ne speke, ne thinke in thought
So her falsherd, and her vnright
May no man tell that euery god wrought
The Gryffon sayde, thou canst no good
Thou came neuer of no gentyl kynde
Other I trowe thou wexest wood
Or els thou hast lost thy mynde

¶ Shulde holy churche haue no heede
Who shuld be her gouernayle
Who shulde her rule, who shuld her rede
Who shulde her forthren, who shuld auayle
Eche man shal lyue by his trauayle
Who best doth, shall haue most mede
With strength if men the churche assayle
With strength men must defende her nede

¶ And the pope were purely poore
Nedy, and nothyng ne hadde
He shulde be dryuen from dore to dore
The wicked of him nolde not be dradde
Of suche an herd men wolde be sadde
And synfully lyuen as hem lust
With strength, amendes suche be made
With wepen wolues from shepe be wust

¶ Yf the pope and prelates wolde
So begge, and bydde, bow and bore we
Holy churche shoulde stande ful colde
Her seruauntes fyt and soupe sorowe
And they were nought foule and horowe
To worshyp god men wold wlate
Both on euen and on morowe
Suche harlotry men wolde hate

Therfore

¶ Therfore men of holy churche
Shulde ben honest in all thinge
Worshipfully gods worde werche
So semeth it to serue Christ her kynge
In honest and in clene clothynge
And vessels of golde and clothes riche
To god honestly to make offrynge
To his lordshyppe none is liche

¶ The pellycan cast an longe crye
And said alas, why sayest thou so
Christ is our hed that syteth on hye
Nedes ne ought we haue no mo
We bene his membres both also
And father he taught vs to call him als
Maisters to be called defended he tho
Nother maisters ben wicked and fals

¶ That taketh maistry in hys name
Goostly, and for earthly good
Kynges and lordes shuld lordshyp haue
And rule the people with mylde mode
Christ for vs that shedde his blode
Bad his prestes no maystershyp haue
Ne carke not for cloth ne fode
From euery myschefe he wyl hem saue

Her riche clothing shalbe ryghtwysnesse
Her treasure, true lyfe shalbe
Charite shalbe her rychesse
Her lordshyp shalbe unite
Hope in god, her honeste
Her vessell clene conscience
Poore in spirite, and humilite
Shalbe holy churches defence.

¶ What said the Grifton may the greue
That other folkes faren wele
What hast thou to done with her lyue
Thy faithed eche man may fele
For thou canst no cattell gete
But lyuest in londe as a lorel
With glosyng gettest thou thy mete
So fareth the diuel that wonneth in hell

The wold that eche mã there shulde dwell
For he lyueth in clene enuye
So with the tales that thou doest tell
Thou woldest other people destrye
With your glose, and your heresye
For ye can lyue no better lyfe
But clime in hipocrisye
And bryngest the in wo and strife

¶ And therwith haue not to done
For ye ne haue here no cure
Ye serue the dyuell, neyther god ne man
And he shal paye you youre hire
For ye wol fare well at festes
And warme clothed for the colde
Therfore ye glose goddes hestes
And begyle the people yonge and olde

¶ And al the seuen sacramentes
Ye speake ayenst, as ye were slye
Yeest tythinges, offringes vp your entẽtes
And on our lordes body falsly lye
And all thys ye done to lyue in ease
As who saith, there ben none suche
And sayne the pope is not worth a pease
To make the people ayen him gruche

¶ And this commeth in by fendes
To bryngе the christen in distaunce
For they wolde that no man were frendes
Leaue thy chattryng with mischaunce
Yf thou lyue well, what wylt thou more
Let other men lyue as hem lyst
Spende in good, or kepe in store
Other mennes conscyence neuer thou nyste

¶ Ye han no cure to answere fore
What meddel ye, that han not to done
Let men lyue as they han done yore
For thou shalt answere for no man
The pellican said, syr, nay
I dispited not the pope
Ne no sacrament, soth to say
But speake in charite and good hope

¶ But I dyspyse her hye pryde
Her richesse, that shulde be pore in spirite
Her wickednesse is know so wyde
They serue god in false habyte
And turnen meknesse in to pryde
And lowlynesse in to hye degre
And goddes wordes turne and hyde
And that am I moued by charyte

¶ To let men to lyue so
With al my conning and al my might
And to warne men of her wo
And to tellen hem trouth and right
The sacramentes be soule hele
Yf they ben vsed in good vse
Ayenst that speake I neuer a dele
For then were I nothyng wyse

¶ Yone they that bsen him in myste maneres
Oz set hem vp to any sale
I trowe they shal abye hem here
This is my reason, this is my tale
Who so taketh hem vnrygh tfully the
Azenst the ten commaundementes
Oz by glose wrecched lyche
Selleth any of the sacramentes

¶ I trowe they do the deuell homage
In that they weren they do wronge
And therto I dare wel wage
They serue Satan for all her songe
To sythen and ofter is holsome lyte
So it be done in dewe manere
I mary to houselyn and to shrifte
Weddyng, and al the other in fere

¶ So it be nother solde ne bought
Ne take ne gyue for couetyse
And it be so taken it is nought
Who selleth hem so, maye sore agryse
On oure Lordes body I do not lye
I say soth thorowe frewe rede
His flesche and blod through his mysterye
Is there, in the forme of brede

¶ How it is there, it nedeth not stryue
Whether yt be substaunce or accydent
But as Christe was, whan he was on lyue
So is he there verament
Yf pope or cardynall lyue good lyue
As Christ commaunded in his gospell
Azenst that will I not stryue
But me thynketh they lyue not well

¶ For if the pope lyued as god bede
Pryde and hy ghnesse he shulde dispise
Rychesse, couetyse, and crowne on hede
Werkenesse and powere he shulde vse
The Gryffon said he shuld abye
Thou shalbe brent in balefull fyre
And all thy frere I shall dystroye
Ye shall be hanged by the swyre

¶ Ye shulled be hanged and to drawe
Who gyueth you leaue for to preache
Oz speke agaynst goddes lawe
And the people thus falsely reache
Thou shalt be cursed with boke and bell
And dystroyed from holy churche
And clene ydampned into hell
Repentaūce but ye will worche

¶ The Pellycane sayd that I ne dede
Your cursyng is of lytel value
Of god I hope to haue my mede
For it is falshed that ye shewe
For ye ben out of charite
And wynneth vengeaunce, as dyd Neto
To suffren I wol redy be
I dede not that thou canst do

¶ Christ bad ones suffre for his loue
And so he taught all his seruauntes
And but thou amende for his sake above
I dede not al thy mayntenaunce
For if I dede the worldes hate
Me thynketh I were lytel to prayse
I dede nothyng your hye estate
Ne I dede not your dysease

Wolde ye turne and lene your pryde
Your hye porte, and your richesse
Your cursyng shulde not go so wyde
God bryngе you into ryght wyfenesse
For I dede not your tranny
For nothyng that ye can done
To suffre I am al redy
Wher I recke neuer howe soone

The Gryffon grynned as he were wood
And loked lourely as an owle
And swore by cokes herte bloode
He wolde him tere euery doule
Holy churche thou dysclaundrest sonle
For thy treasons I wol the al to race
And make thy flesche to rote and moule
Losel, thou shalt haue harde grace

The Gryffon flewe forth on his waye
The Pellycane dyd syt and wepe
And to him selfe he gan saye
God wolde that any of Christes shepe
Had herde, and take kepe
Eche a worde that here sayd was
And wolde it write and wel it kepe
God wolde it were all for his grace

Plowman
I answerde, and sayd I wolde
Yf for my trauayle any man wolde pey
Pellycan. He said yes, these god han solde
For they han store of money
Plowman. I sayd, tel me and thou maye
Why tellest thou mens trespace
Pellycan. He sayd, to amende hem in good fay
Yf god wol gyue me any grace

For Chriſte him ſelfe is lykened to me
That for hys people dyed on roode
In face I, right ſo fareth he
He feedeth his birdes with his blode
But theſe done euyll ayenſt good
And ben his fone vnder frendes face
I tolde hem howe her lyuing ſtode
God amende hem for his grace

Plowman, what ayleth ȳ Griffon, tel why
That he holdeth on the other ſyde
For they two ben lyke ly
And with kyndes roben wyde
Pellicane. The foule betokeneth pryde
As Lucifer, That high ſtewe was
And ſith he dyd hym in euyll hyde
For he agyited goddes grace

As birde flyeth vp in the ayre
And lyueth by bydes that ben meke
So theſe ben ſtowe vp in to diſpayre
And therden ſely ſoules eke
The ſoules that ben in ſinnes ſeke
He calleth hem, knele therfore alas
For bybry goddes forbode breke
God amende it for his grace

The hinder parte is a lyon
A robber and a rauyner
That robbeth the people in erth downe
And in erth holdeth none his pere
So fareth this foule both ferre and nere
And with ẽpoyer ſtrength the people chaſe
As a lyon proude in erth here
God amende hem for his grace.

Pellicane

The ſtewe forth with his winges twayne
A droupyng, daſed, and dul
But ſoone the griffon came agayne
Of his foules the earth was ful
The Pellicane he had caſte to pul
So great a numbre neuer ſene there was
What maner of foules tellen I wol
If god wol gyue me of his grace

With the griffon comen foules fele
Rauyns, rokes, crowes, and pye
Gray foules, agadred wele
I gurde aboue they wouldе hye
Birdes and boſardes weren hem by
Arbur molles and puttockes token her place
And lapwinges, that wel conneth lye
This felowſhyp han for gerde her grace

Long the Pellican was oute
But at laſt he commeth agayne
And brought with him the Phenix ſtoute
The Griffon wold haue ſlow ful faine
His foules that flewen as thicke as rayne
The Phenix tho began hem chace
To flye from him it was in vayne
For he dyd vengraunce and no grace

The ſtewe hem downe without mercy
There aſkarte neyther free ne thrall
On him they caſt a rufull crye
When the Gryffon downe was fall
He bete him not, but ſtewe hem all
Whyther he hem drone no man may trace
Vnder the erth me thought they fall
Alas they had a feble grace

The Pellycan then axed ryght
For my writyng if I haue blame
Who wol for me fyght of flyghte
Who ſhal ſheld me from ſhame
He that had a mayde to dame
And the lambe that ſlayne was
Shal ſheld me from goſtly blame
For erthely harme is goddes grace

Therfore I pray euery man
Of my writyng haue me excuſed
This writing writeth the Pellican
That thus theſe people hath dyſpyſed
For I am freſhe fully aduiſed
I nyll not mayntayne his manace
For the deuel is often diſguyſed
To bryng a man to yuell grace

Wryteth the Pellican and not me
For herof I nyl not auowe
In hye ne in lowe, ne in no degre
But as a fable take it ye mowe
To holy churche I wyll me bowe
Eche man to amende him Chriſte ſende ſpace
And for my wrytyng me alowe
He that is almighty for hys grace.

Here endeth the Plowmans tale, and here after foloweth the Perſons prologue.

By that the plowerman had his tale ended
The sonne fro the southe lyne is descended
So lowe, that it was nat to my syghte
Degrees of fyue and twenty on hight
Terme at clocke it was, so as I gesse
For enleuen foote, a lytel more or lesse
My shadowe was at that tyme, as there
Of suche fete as my length parted were
In sixe fete equallye of proporcion
Therwith the moones exaltacion
I mene Libra, alway gan ascende
As we were entring at the thropes ende
For which our hoste, as he was wont to gye
Ye in this case, this holy companye
Sayd in this wyse, lordynges euerychone
Nowe lacketh vs no tale more than one
Fulfylled is my sentence and my decre
Who wol nowe telle a tale let se
Almoste fulfylled is my ordynaunce
I pray to god to yeue him right good chaunce
That telleth thys tale to vs lustely
Sir preest (quod he) arte thou a vicary
Or arte thou a person, say forth by thy fay
Be what thou be, breke thou not our play
For euery man save thou, hath tolde his tale
Unbokell, & shewe vs what is in thy male
For trewely me thinketh by thy chere
Thou shuldest knit vp wel a great matere
Tell vs a fable anon, for cockes bones
¶ This person him answerde al at ones
Thou getest fable none tolde of me
For Poule, that writeth to Tymothe
Reproueth hem that wayuen sothfastnesse
And techen fables, and suche wretchednesse
Why shulde I sowe draffe out of my fyste
Whan I may sowe whete, if that my lyst
For whiche I saye, if that ye lust to here
Moralyte, and of vertuous matere
And than, yf ye wol yeue me audience
I wolde ful fayne at Christes reuerence
Some you pleasaunce leful, as I can
But trusteth wel, I am a southern man
I can not Ryme, rum, ram, ruf, by letter
And god wote, rime holde I but litle better
And therfore if ye lyste, I wol not glose
I wol you tell a lytell tale in prose
To knit vp all this feest, and make an ende
And Jesu for hys grace, wit me sende
To shewe you the way, in thys voyage
Of thilke perfyte glorioufe pilgrimage
That hight Jerusalem celestial
And if you vouchesafe, anon I shall
Begin vpon my tale, for whiche I pray
[illegible] ye, I can no better say
[illegible] his medicacion
[illegible] the correccion
[illegible] not terre vell
I [illegible] ence, trusteth well
Therto [illegible] protestacion
That I [illegible] to correccion.
¶ Upon this [illegible], but haue assented sone
For as it semed me, it was for to done
To ende in some vertuous sentence
And for to yeue him space and audience
And bade our hoste he shulde to him say
That al we, to tell his tale him pray
Our hoste had the wordes for vs all
Sir preest (quod he) nowe fayre mote you befall
Say that what ye lyste, & we shal gladly here
And with wordes he sayde in this manere
Telleth (quod he) your meditacion
But hasteth you, the sonne wol a doun
Beth fructuous, and that in lytel space
And to do wel, god sende you his grace.

¶ Here endeth the Persons prologue, and hereafter followeth hys tale.

¶ Jeremi. vi. State super vias, et videte, et interrogate de semitis antiquis, que sit via bona, et ambulate in ea: et inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris.

Our swete lorde god of heuen, that no man wol perysche, but wol that we turne al to the knowinge of hym, and to the blisful lyfe that is perdurable, amonesheth vs by the prophete Jeremye, that saith in this wise. Stondeth vpon ỹ wayes & seeth, and aske of olde pathes: that is to saye, of olde sentences, whiche is the good waye, and walketh in that waye, and ye shal fynde refreshyng for your soules. &c. Many ben the wayes espirituelles that lede folke to our lorde Jesu Christ, and to the reigne of glorye: Of whiche wayes there is a ful noble waye, and full conuenable, whiche may not fayle to man ne to woman, that thorugh synne hath misgone fro the right way of Jerusalem

ysalem crieshyall: and this way is called penitence, of whiche man shulde gladlye herken and enquire with al his hert, to wete what is penitence, and whiche is called penitence, and howe many maners bene of actions or werkynges of penitence, and howe manye speces there ben of penitence, and which thynges apertayne and behoue to penitence, and which thynges disturbe penitence.

Saint Ambrose saith, that penitence is the playnynge of man for the gylte that he hathe done, and no more to do any thynge for which hym oughte to playne. And some doctours saith, Penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorroweth for his synne, and payneth him selfe, for he hath misdon. Penitence with certayne circumstaunces, is very repentaunce of a man that holte him selfe in sorowe, & other payne for his gyltes: and for he shall be very penitent, he shall first bewayle sinnes that he hath done, and stedfastlye purpose in his hert to haue shrifte of mouthe, & to do satisfactiō, and neuer to do thyng, for whiche him ought more bewayle or complayne, and contynewe in good workes: or els his repentaunce may not anayle. For as saint Isodor sayethe. He is a laper and a lyer, and no very repentaunt, that eftsone doth thyng, for whiche him ought repente. Wrytynge and not for to stynte to do synne, maye not anayle: But natheless men shal hope that at euerye tyme that mā falleth, be it neuer so ofte, that he may aryse through penaunce, yf he haue grace: but certayne it is great doute, for as saithe sainte Gregorye. Unnethes arysteth he out of syn, that is chargyd with the charge of yuell vsage. And therfore repentaunt folke, that stynt for to synne, and leue synne or synne leue thē, holy churche holdeth them syker of their saluacion. And he that synneth, and verely repenteth hym in his laste ende: holy churche yet hopeth his saluacion, by þ great mercy of our lord Jesu christ, for his repentaunce: but take the syker waye. ¶ And nowe syth I haue declared you, what thyng is Penitēce, nowe ye shal vnderstonde, that there ben thre actions of penitence. The first is, that a man be baptised after that he hathe synned. Saynte Austyn sayethe, but he be penytent for his olde synfull lyfe, he maye not begyn the newe clene lyfe: For certes if he be baptised without penitēce of his olde gilt, he retayneth þ marke of baptyme, but not the grace ne the remyssyon of hys synnes, tyll he haue very repentaunce. An other defaute is this, that men do deedly synne after that they haue receyued baptisme. The thirde defaute is this, that men fall in venyall synnes after her baptisme, fro day to daye. Therof sayethe saynte Augustyn, that penitence of good and humble folke, is the penitence of euery daye.

The speces of penitence ben thre: That one of hem is solempne: an other is cōmune, and the thirde is priuy. That penaūce that is solempne is in two maners: As to be put out of holye churche in lent, for slaughter of chyldren, and suche maner thynge. An other is when a man hath synned openlye, of whyche synne the fame is openly spoken in the countrye: and than holy churche by iudgement, distrayneth hym for to do open penaunce.

Cōmen penaunce is, that preestes enioyne men in certayne case: as for to go peraūbulate naked in pilgrimage, or bare fote. Priuy penaunce is that, that men do al daye for priuy synnes, of whiche we shryue vs priuely, and receyue priuy penaunce. ¶ Nowe shalt thou vnderstond, what is behoueful and necessary to very perfite penitence: and this stonte on thre thynges. Contricion of herte, confession of mouthe, & satisfaccion. For whiche sayethe saynt Johan Chrisostom, Penitence distrayneth a man to accept benignely euery payne, that hym is enioyned, with contricion of hert, and shrifte of mouthe, with satisfaction: and in werkynge of al maner humilite. And this is fruitfull penitence ayenste thre thinges, in which we wrathe our lord Jesu Christ: thys is to saye, By delyte in thinkinge by recheleslye in spekynge, & by wicked sinnefull werkyng. And ayenste these wicked gyltes is penitence, that may be lykened vnto a tre.

The rote of this tree is contricion, that hydeth him in the hert of him that is very repentaunt, right as the rote of the tre hydeth him in the erthe. Of thys roote of contricion springeth a stalke, that berreth braūches and leues of confession, and fruite of satisfaccion. For which Christ sayeth in his gospel. Doth digne fruite of penitēce, for by this fruite men may knowe the tre, and not by the rote that is hid in the herte of manne, ne by the braunches, ne the leues of confession. And therfore our lord Jesu Christ sayth thus: By the fruite of hem shal ye knowe hem. Of this roote also springeth a sede of grace, the which sede is mother of al sykernesse, and this sede is eiger & hote

The

The grace of this sede syngeth of god thrugh remembraunce on the daye of dome, and on the paynes of hell. Of thys mater saithe Salomon, that in the drede of god, man forleteth hys synne. The heate of this sede is the loue of god, and ꝑ desyring of the ioy perdurable: This heate draweth the hert of man to God, and doth him hate his synne: For sothly there is nothyng that sauoureth so wel to a chylde, as the mylke of his nourrice, ne nothyng is to him more abhominable than ꝑ mylke, whan it is medled with other meate. Right so the synful man that loueth his synne, him semeth that it is to him most swete of any thing, but fro that time he loueth sadly oure lorde Jesu Christ, and despyzeth the lyfe perdurable, ther is to him no thynge more abhominable: For sothly the law of God is the loue of god. For whyche Dauid the prophete saithe: I haue loued thy lawe, & hated wyckednesse: He that loueth god, kepeth his law and his worde.

¶ This tree sawe the prophete Daniel in spirite, on the vision of Nabugodonosor, whan he counsayled him to do penitence. Penaunce is the tree of lyfe, to hem that it receyue, and he that holdeth hi in very penitence is blessed after the sentence of Salomon. In this penytence or contrycion, man shall vnderstonde foure thinges, that is to say: What is contrycyon, and whiche ben the causes that moue a man to contricion, and how he shulde be contryte, and what contrycyon auayleth to the soule. Than is it thus, that contrycion is the very sorowe, that a man receyueth in his hert for his synnes, with sadde purpose to shryue him, and to do penaũce, and neuer more to do synne: And this sorowe shal be in this maner, as sayth sayne Bernarde: It shall be heuye and greuouse, and full sharpe and poynaunte in herte. ¶ Fyrste, for a man hathe agilted hys lorde and his creatoure, and more sharpe and poynaunt, for he hathe agilted his father celestyal: And yet more sharpe & poynaunt, for he hath wrathed and agilted him that bought him, that with his precious bloode hath deliuered vs fro the bondes of synne, and fro the crueltè of the dyuel, & fro the paynes of hell.

The causes that ought moue a man to contrition bene syxe. First a man shall remembre him of his synnes, but loke that that remembraunce ne be to hym no delyte, by no waye, but greate shame and sorowe for hys synnes. For Job saith, sinful men done workes worthy of confession. And therfore sayth Ezechiel: I wol remembre me al the yeres of my lyfe, in the bitternesse of my herte. And god sayth in the Apocalipse: Remembre ye from whence that ye ben fall, for before that tyme that ye sinned, ye were children of god, and lemmes of the reigne of god: But for your synne ye ben wayen thrall and foule, & membres of the fende: hate of angels, slaunder of holye churche, and foode of the false serpent, perpetuall matere of the fyre of hell: And yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespace so oft tymes, as dothe an houndè ꝑ returneth ayen to ete his owne spewing: & yet be ye fouler, for your longe continuing in synne, & your sinfull vsage, for whiche ye be rotted in your synne, as a berste in his donge. Suche maner of thoughtes make a man to haue shame of his synne, and no delyte. As god sayth, by the prophete Ezechiel: Ye shall remembre you of your wayes, & they shull displese you forthey. Sinnes ben the wayes that lede folke to hel.

The seconde cause that ought make a man to haue disdayne of synne is this, that as sayth sayne Peter: Who so dorh sin, is thrall of synne, and synne putteth a man in great thraldome. And therfore sayth the prophete Ezechiell: I went sorowful, in disdayne of my selfe. Certes well ought a man haue disdayne of synne, and withdrawe him fro that thraldome and vilany. And lo what sayth Seneke in thys mater, he sayth thus: Though I wiste, that neither god ne man shulde neuer knowe it, yet wulde I haue disdayne for to do synne. And the same Seneke also sayth: I am bore to greater thyng, than to be thral to my body, or for to make of my body a thrall. Ne a fouler thrall may no man ne woman make of his bodye, than for to yeue his body to synne, all were it the fowlest churle, or the foulest woman that lyueth, and leste of value, yet is he than more foule, and more in fredinde. Euer fro the hyghe degre that man falleth, the more is he thrall, and more to god and to the worlde vyle and abhominable. O good god, wel ought man haue greate disdayne of synne, sith ꝑ through synne, there he was fre he is made bonde. And therfore sayth sayne Austyn: If thou hast disdayne of thy seruaunt, if he offende a synne, haue thou than disdayne that thou thy selfe shuldest do synne. Take rewarde of thyn owne

...me bileue, that thou ne be to foule to thy
...ker. Alas well ought they than haue dis-
...ayne to be seruaunts and thralles to sinne,
...nd sore to be ashamed of the seike, that god
...f his endeles goodnesse hath sette in hyghe
...ame, as yeue hem witte, strength of bodye,
...aile, beaute, or prosperite, and bought hem
...o the deth with his herte blode, that they so
...orgulye, ayenst hys gentilnesse, quite hym
...is vilanye, to slaughter of her owne soules.
...O good god, ye women ꝑ ben of great
...eaute, remembreth you on the prouerbe of
...alomon. He sayth he lykneth a faire wo-
...man, that is a foole of her bodye, to a ring of
...olde ꝑ were wrone on the grone of a sowe:
...or right as a sowe wroteth in euery ordure
...o wroteth she her beaute in stinkyng ordure
...f synne.

The thirde cause ꝑ ought to meue a man
to contricion, is drede of the daye of
dome, & of the horrible paynes of hell. For as
sayne Jerom sayth: At euery tyme that me
remembreth of the daye of dome. I quake:
for when I eete and drinke, or what so that
I do, euer semeth me that ꝑ trompe sowneth
in myne eere: Ryseth ye vp that ben deed, and
cometh to the iugement. O good god, muche
ought a man to drede such a iugemẽt, ther as
we shal be all, as sayne Poule sayth, before
the sete of our lorde Jesu Christ, where as he
shal make a generall congregacion, where as
no man may be absent, for certes there auay-
leth none essoyne ne excusacion, and not onely
that our defautes shalbe iuged, but also that
all our werkes shall openly be knowen. And
as sayth saint Barnarde, there ne shal no ple-
dyng auayle, ne no sleight: We shall yeue te-
moygnage, of euery idle worde. There shall we
haue a iuge that may not be deceyued ne cor-
rupte, and why? For certes, all our thoughtes
ben discouered, as to him, ne for prayer ne for
mede, he shall not be corrupte. And therfore
sayth Salomon: The wrathe of god ne will
not spare no wight, for prayer ne for yefte.
And therefore at the day of dome, there is no
bope to escape. Wherefore, as saith saint Au-
stin: ful great anguisshe shal ꝑ sinneful folke
haue at that tyme: There shall the fiers and
wrothe iuge sytte aboue, and vnder hym the
horrible pytte of hel open, to distroy him that
man be knowe, his synnes, whiche synnes o-
penly be shewed before god and before euery
creature: And on the left syde, mo diuels than
any herte may thynke, for to bale & drawe the
synfull soules to the payne of hell, and with-
in the hertes of folke shall be the biting cõcie-
nce, and without forth shal be the worlde all
brenning: whither shall than the wrecched sin-
ful man flye to hyde hym? Certes he may not
hyde him, he must come forth and shewe him.
For certes, as saith saint Jerom, the erth shal
rise him out of it & the see also, & the ayre that
shal be full of thonder clappes & lightninges.
Now sothly, who so wel remembreth him of
these thinges: I gesse that his sinne shall not
turne hym in delyte, but to great sorowe, for
drede of the payne of hell. And therfore sayth
Job to god: suffre lorde, that I may a whyle
bewayle & wepe, er I go without returning
to the derke londe, couered with the derkenesse
of deth, to the londe of misese & of derkenesse,
where as is ꝑ shadow of deth, where as there
is non order or ordinaunce, but ferefull drede
that euer shal last. Lo, here maye you se, that
Job prayed respyte a whyle, to bewepe and
wayle hys trespase: for sothely one day of re-
spite is better than al ꝑ tresour of this world.
And for as muche as a man may acquite him
selfe before god by penitence in this worlde,
and not by tresour, therfore shulde he pray to
god to yeue him respite a whyle, to bewepe &
wayle his trespace: For certes, al the sorowe
that a manne myght make fro the beginning
of the worlde, nys but a lytel thing, at regard
of the sorowe of hell. The cause why that
Job calleth hell the londe of derkenesse, vn-
derstondeth that he calleth it londe or erth, for
it is stable and neuer shall fayle, & derke: For
he that is in hell hath defaute of lyght mate-
riall, for certes the derke light that shal come
out of the fire that euer shall brẽne, shal turne
him al to payne that is in hell, for it sheweth
him to the horrible dyuels that him turmen-
teth, couered with the derkenesse of deth, that
is to say, that he that is in hell, shall haue de-
faute of the sight of god: for certes the syght
of god is the lyfe perdurable. The derkenesse
of dethe, ben ꝑ sinnes that the wrecched man
hath done, whiche that disturbe him to se the
face of god, right as the derke clonde berwixt
vs & the sunne. Londe of misese, bycause that
there ben thre maner of defautes ayenst thre
thinges that folke of this worlde haue in this
present lyfe, that is to saye: honours, delices,
and richesse. Ayenst honour haue they in hell
shame

shame and confusion: For well ye wote, that men callen honour the reuerence that man doth to man, but in hell is nat honour ne reuerence. For certes, no more reuerence shalbe there to a king, than to a knaue. For wherfor god saith by the prophet Jeremy: Those folke that me dispise, shall be in dispyte. Honoure is also called great lordshipe: there shal no wight serue other, but of harme & torment. Honoure is also called great dignite & highnesse, but in hell shal they be all fortroden of diuelles. As god sayth: the horrible hyrels shall go and come vpon the hedes of dampned folke: and this is, for as much as the higher þ they were in this present life, the more shal they be abated & defoyled in hell. Ayenste the richesse of this world shall they haue misese of pouerte, that shal be in foure thynges. In defaute of tresour. Of whiche Dauid sayth: The ryche folke that embrace & knit all her herte to tresour of thys worlde, shal slepe in the slepynge of dethe, and nothynge ne shall they fynde in her honden of all her tresour. And more ouer the misease of hell shal be in defaute of mete and drinke. For god sayth thus by Moyses: They shall be wasted with hunger, & the byrdes of hell shal deuour hem, with bitter deth, and the gal of the dragon shal be her drynke, and the venym of the dragon her morsels. Also her misese shal be in defaute of clothig, for they shal be naked in body, as of clothing, saue the fire in whiche they brenne, and other fythes: & naked shall they be of soule, of all maner vertues, which þ is the clothing of the soule. Archers ben than the gay robes, the soft sheres, & the smal sheres? I.e. what saith god of hem by the prophet Jsaye, that vnder hem shal be strewed moughtes, & her couertures shall be of wormes of hell? Also her misese shalbe in defaute of frendes, for he is not poore that hath good frendes, but ther is no frende, for neither god ne no creature shall be frendly to hem, & eche of hem shal hate other vt deadly hate. The sonnes & the doughters shal rebell ayenst father & mother, & hurt ayenst hurt, thy be þ despite eche other, bothe day and night, as god saith by the prophet Ysaiens: And the lowrage children þ whylom loued so fleshly eche other, wold eche of hem ete other if they myght. For howe shulde they loue together in the peynes of hel, whan they hated eche other in prosperite of this life? for truste wel, her fleshly loue was deadly hate. As sayth the prophete Dauyd: Who so þ loueth wickednesse, he hateth his soule, & who so hateth his owne soule, certes he may loue none other wight in no maner. And therfore wel is no solace ne no frendshyp, but euer þ more lyuedes that ben in hel, the more enemyes, the more chydinges, and the more debate ther is amonge hem. Also they shall haue defaute of al maner delices, for certes beyond ben after the appetites of þ fyue wittes: Sight, herynge, smellinge, sauouring, and touchinge. But in hell her sighte shall be full of derkenesse & of smoke, and therfore full of teres, and her herynge ful of wayling and gryntinge of eethe: As sayth Jesu Christ. Her nostrilles shal be ful of stynkyng. And, as sayth Jsaye the prophete: Her sauouring shall be full of bitter gall, and as touchinge of all her bodyes, couered with fire, that nought shall quenche, & with wormes that neuer shall dye. As god sayth by the mouth of Jsaye: and yet as much as they shal not wene that they may dye for payne, and by dethe flye fro payn, that may they vnderstonde in the wordes of Job, that sayethe: There is the shadowe of dethe. Certes a shadowe hath likenesse of the thing of whiche it is shadowed, but shadowe is not the same thig of whiche it is shadowed: right so sareth the payne of hell, it is like dethe, for the horrible anguisshe. And why? For it paineth hem euer as though they shuld dye anon, but certes they shal not die. For as saith saint Grey. to wretched caytifes shalbe deth without dethe, & ende without ende, & defaute vt out faylig, for her deth shal alwai line, & her end shal euer more begin, & her defaute shal not faile.

And therfore sayth sayntе Johan the Euangelyst, they shal folowe dethe, & they shal not finde hym, and they shal desire to dye, & deth shal flye from hym. And also Job sayth, that in hel is no order of rule. And all be it so, that god hath create al thinge in right order, & nothinge without order, but all thynges ben ordred & nombred, yet natheles they that ben dampned ben nothyng in order, ne holde non order, for the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruit. For, as the prophete Dauid sayth: God shal distroye the fruite of the erth, as for hem, ne water, ne shall yeue hem no moysture, ne the eyre no refreshynge, ne fire no lyght. For as sayth saynt Basilie: The brennynge of the fire of this worlde shall god yeue in hell to hem that ben dampned, but the light & þ clerenesse

shall

shal be yeue in heuen to his children: right as good men yeue flesshe to her children, & bones to her hounden. And for they shall haue none hope to escape, saith sayntе Job at laste, that there shal ernoure and grefly drede dwell with out ende. Horrour is alway drede that is to come, and this drede shal alwaye dwel in the hertes of hem that be dampned. And therfore haue they loste al her hope for seuen causes. First for god that is her iuge shal be without mercy to hem, and they may not please him ne none of his saintes, ne they may not yeue no thyng for her raunsome, ne they shall haue no leyser to speke to him, ne they may not fle fro payne, ne they haue no goodnesse in hem that they may shewe to delyuer hem fro payne. And therfore sayth Salomon: The wycked man dyeth, and whan he is dede, he shal haue no hope to escape fro payne. Who so than could wel vnderstonde the paines, & bethynke hym well that he hath deserued those paynes for his synnes, certes he shulde haue more talent to syghe and wepe, than for to synge and playe. For as sayth Salomon, who so that had the science to knowe the paynes that ben ordayned for synne, he wolde make sorowe. That science, as sayth sayntе Austyn, maketh a man to weyment in his herte.

The fourth poynte that ought make a man haue contrycion, is the sorowfull remembraunce of the good that he hath lefte to do here in earthe, and also the good that he hath loste. Sothly the good werkes þ he hath lefte, eyther they be the good werkes that he wrought er he fyll in deedly synne, or elles the good werkes that he wrought whyle he lay in synne. Sothely the good werkes that he dyd before that he fyll in synne bene al mortyfied, alloned, and dul by ofte synnynge. The werkes that he dyd whyle he lay in synne be deed, as to the lyfe perdurable in heuen: than the good werkes þ ben mortifyed by oft sinning, which he did beyng in charite, may not quicke ayen without very penytence. And of it sayth god by þ mouthe of Ezechiel: If the rightful man returne ayen fro his rightwysnesse & do wyckednesse, shall he lyue nay: for all þ good werkes that he hath do, ne shal neuer be in remembraunce, for he shall dye in his syn. And vpon þ chapitre sayth sayntе Gregorie thus, that we shall vnderstond thys principally: If that we don deedly synne, it is for nought thā to reherce or drawe in to memory þ good werkes that we haue wrought before: for certes in the werkig of deedly synne, ther is no truste to no good werke that we haue done before: that is to say, as for to haue thereby the lyfe perdurable in heuen. But natheless the good werkes quicken and come agayne, and helpe and auayle to haue þ lyfe perdurable in heuen whā we haue cōtrycion: But sothly the good werkes that men don whyle they be in deedly synne, for as moch as they were don in deedly syn, they may neuer quicke: for certes, thynge that neuer had lyfe, maye neuer quicke: And natheless al be it that they auayle not to haue þ lyfe perdurable, yet auayle they to abredge of the payne of hell, or els to get temporel ryches, or els þ god wol the rather enlumyne or lyght the hert of the synful man to haue repentaūce, & eke they auayle for to vse a man to do good werkes, that þ fende haue the lesse power of his soule. And thus þ entreys lorde Jesu Christ ne wol þ no good werke be loste, for in somwhat it shall auayle. But for as moch as the good werkes that mē don whyle they ben in good lyfe, ben al amortised by syn folowyng: & also syth that all þ good werkes that mē don whyle they be in deedly synne ben vtterly deed, as for to haue þ lyfe perdurable, well maye that man that no good werke ne dothe, synge that new frethe songe (Tout perdu mon temps, et mon labure). For certes synne byreueth a man bothe goodnesse of nature, & also the goodnesse of grace. For sothly the grace of the holy goste fareth like fyre that maye not be ydell, for fyre fayleth anon as it forleteth his werkyng: and right so grace fayleth anon as it forleteth his werkynge. Than leseth the synful man the goodnesse of glory, that only is behyght to good mē that labour and werke. Wel may he be sory than þ oweth al his lyfe to god, as longe as he hathe lyued, and also as longe as he shal lyue, þ no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to god, to whom he oweth al his lyfe: for truste well he shall yeue accōptes, as saithe sayntе Bernarde of all þ goodes that haue ben yeue him in this present lyfe, and how he hath hem dispended, in so moch that there shal not perysh an heere of his heed, ne a moment of an houre, ne shall not perysshe of his tyme, that he ne shall yeue of it a rekenyng.

The fyfth thinge that ought to moue a man to contrycyon, is remembraunce of the passion that our lorde Jesu Christe suffred for our synnes. For as saithe sayne Bernarde, whyle that I lyue I shall haue remembraunce of the trauayles that our lorde Jesu Christ suffred in pyrchynge, hys werynesse in trauayling, his temptacions whan he fasted, his longe wakynges whan he prayed, his teres whan that he wepte for pery of good people, the wo, the shame, and the fylth that men layde to him: of the foule spyttyng that men spyt in his face, of the buffettes that mē yaue hym: of the foule mowes and of the reproues that men said to him: of the nayles, with whiche he was nayled to the crosse, and of all the remnaunt of hys passyon that he suffred for my synnes, & no thinge for his gylte. And ye shall vnderstande, that in mans synne is euery maner ordre or ordynaunce turned vp so downe. For it is sothe, that God, reason, sensualyte, and the bodye of man, bene ordayned that eche of these foure thynges should haue lordshyp ouer that other: as thus. God shulde haue lordshyp ouer reson, and reson ouer sensualyte, and sensualyte ouer the body of man. But sothly whan man synneth, all thys ordre or ordynaūce is turned vp so down. And therfore thā, for as moche as reson of man ne wol not be subiect ne obeysaunt to god, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth hit ꝑ lordshyp that it shulde haue ouer sensualyte, and also ouer the body of man. And why? for sensualyte rebelleth than ayenst reson: and by that way leseth reson the lordshyp ouer sensualyte & ouer the body: for ryght as reson is rebell to god, right so is bothe sensualite rebel to reson & to the body also. And certes this disordinaūce & this rebellyon our lorde Jesu Christe bought vpon his precyous body ful dere: & herkeneth in what wise. For as moche than as reason is rebel to god, therfore is man worthy to haue sorow & to be dead. This suffred our lord Jesu Christ for man, after ꝑ he had be betrayed of his disciple, & distrayned & bounde, so that his blode brast out at euery nayle of his handes, as saith saint Justyn. And ferthermore, for as moche as reson of man wol not daunt sensualyte, whan it may, therfore is man worthy to haue shame: & this suffred our lord Jesu Christ for man, whan they spyt in his visage. And ferthermore, for as moche thā as the cayte body of man is rebel bothe to reson & to sensualyte, therefore it is worthy deth, & this suffred our lorde Jesu Christ vpon the crosse, where as there was no parte of his body fre without great payne & bytter passyon: and al this suffred our lorde Jesu Christe that neuer forfaited. And therfore resonably may be said of Jesu in this maner: To moche am I payned for thinges that I neuer deserued, and to moch defouled for shame that man is worthy to haue: And therfore may ꝑ synful man wel say, as saith saint Bernarde. Acursed be the bytternesse of my sinne, for which there must be suffred so moch bytternes. For certes after the diuers discordāce of our wickednes, was the passion of Jesu Christ ordained in diuers thinges: as thus. Certes synfull mans soule is betrayed of the deuel by courtyse of temporel prosperite, & scorned by discrete whā that he cheseth fleshly delyces, and yet it is tormented by impacience of aduersite, & despered by lenuage & subiection of synne, & at the laste is slayne fynally. For this disordynaunce of synfull man was Jesu Christ sith betrayed, & after ꝑ was he bounde, that came for to vnbynde vs of synne & of payne. Than was he blemmed, ꝑ only shuld haue be honoured in al thynges. Thā was his visage ꝑ ought be delited to be seene of all mankynde, in whyche visage angels desyre to loke, vilaynesly despysed. Thā was he scourged that nothyng had trespased, and fynally he was crucifyed & slayne. Than was accōplissched the wordes of Jsay: He was wounded for our misdedes, & defouled for our fryonyes. Now syth that Jesu Christ toke on him the payn of al our wickednesses, moch ought synfull man wepe and bewayle, that for his synnes goddes sone of heuē shuld al this payne endure.

The syxte thynge ꝑ shulde meue a man to contricion, is the hope of thre thynges, that is to say: forgyuenesse of synne, and the yefte of grace for to do well, & the glorye of heuen, with which god shal rewarde man for his good dedes: And for as moche as Jesu christ yeueth vs these yeftes of his largenesse and of his soueraine boūte, therfore is he called (Jesus Nazarenus rex Judeorū) Jesus is to say, saul our or saluacion, on whom menne shal hope to haue forgyuenesse of synnes, whyche that is properly saluacion of synnes. And therfore said the angell to Joseph, thou shalte cal his name Jesus, that shal saue his people of her

after synnes. And herof saithe saynte Peter: There is none other name vnder heauen that is gyuē to any man, by whiche a man may be saued, but oncly Jesus. Nazarenus is as mo ne for to saye, as flourishynge, in whyche a man shall hope that he that yeueth hym remissyon of synnes, shall yeue him also grace well to do. I was at the dore of thyn hert saith Jesus, & called for to entre: he that openeth to me shall haue forgyuenes of hys synne. I wol entre in to him by my grace, & suppe with him by the good werkes ꝑ he shall do, which werkes beue the foode of ꝑ soule, & he shall suppe with me, by ꝑ great ioy that I shal yeue him. Thus shall man hope for hys werkes of penaūce, that god shal yeue him his reigne, as he taught him in the gospel. Nowe shall a man vnderstande in whiche maner shal be his contrycion: I saye that it shall be vnyuersall and playn, this is to say: a man shall be very repēnaūt for all his synnes that he hath done in thre of his thought, for it is right perillous. For there beue two maner of consentynges, that one of hem is called consentyng of affection, whan a man is moued to do synne, and than delyteth him longe for to thynk on that synne, and his reason apperceiueth it wel that it is synne ayenst the lawe of god, and yet his reason refrayneth not hys foule delyte to take, though he se wel apertly that it is ayenst the reuerence of god, al thoughe his reason ne constreine not to do that synne in dede, yet saye some doctours that such delite that dwelleth longe is ful perylous, all be it neuer so lytell. And also a man shulde sorowe, namelye for al that euer he hath desyred ayenst the law of god, with perfyte consenting of his reson, for therof is no doute that it is deedly synne in consenting: for certes there is no deedly sinne but that it is first in mans thought, and after that in his delyte, and so forthe in to consentyng and in to dede. Wherfore I say ꝑ manye men ne repent hem neuer of suche thoughtes and delyces, ne neuer shriue hem of it, but only of the dede of great synnes outward: wherfore I saye that suche wicked delites ben subtyl begylers of hem that shall be dampned.

More ouer, man ought to sorowe for his wicked wordes as wel as for his wycked dedes: for certes the repentaūce of a synguler synne, and not repentaunt of al his other synnes, or els repent him of al his other synnes, and not of a synguler synne, may not auayle: for certes god almighty is al good, and therfore eyther he forgyueth al, or els right nought. And therfore saithe saynte Augustyn: I wote certaynly that god is enemy to euery synner: and howe than he that obserueth one synne, shall he haue forgyuenesse of those other synnes? Naye. And more ouer contrycyon shoulde be wonder sorowful and anguyshous and therfore yeueth him God playnly his mercy: And therfore whan my soule was anguyshed and sorowful within me, than had I remēbraūce of god, that my prayer myght come to hym. Ferthermore, contricion must be contynuall, and that man haue stedfast purpose to shryue him and to amende him of hys lyfe. For sothly whyle contrycyon lasteth, man maye euer hope to haue forgyuenes. And of this cometh hate of synne, that dystroyeth bothe synne in him selfe, and also in other folke at hys power. For whyche saythe Dauid: They that loue god hate wickednesse: for to loue god is for to loue that he loueth, and hate that he hateth. The laste thynge that men shall vnderstonde is this, wherefore auayleth cōtrycion. I say ꝑ contrycion somtyme delyuereth man fro synne: Of which Dauid saith, I say (sayd Dauid) I purposed fermely to shriue me, and thou forde releyddest my synne. And ryght so as contricyon auayleth not without sad purpose of shrifte if man haue opportunyte, ryghte so lytel worthe is shryfte or satysfaction with oute contricion. And more ouer contrycion distroyeth the prison of hell, & maketh weake and feable al the strēgthes of the dyuels, and restoreth the yeftes of the holy goste and of al good vertues, and it clenseth ꝑ soule of synne and delyuereth it fro the payne of hell, & fro the company of the dyuel, and fro the seruage of synne, and restoreth it to all goodes spirituels, and to the companye and comunyon of holy church. Ferthermore it maketh him that whylom was sonne of yre, to be the sonne of grace: And al these thiges ben proued by holy writte. And therfore he that wolde set his entent to these thinges he were ful wise, for truly he ne shulde haue than in al his lyfe corage to synne, but yeue his herte and body to serue Christ, and therof do him homage. For truly our lorde hath spared vs so mekely in our folyes, that if he ne had pyte of mannes soule, a sory songe might we all synge.

Explicit prima pars penitentie:
et incipit pars secunda.

The seconde parte of penitence is confessyon, that is signe of contricion. Nowe shul ye vnderstōd what is confessyon, and yf it ought nedes be don or no, & which thinges be couenable to very cōfession. First shalt þ vnderstonde, þ cōfession is very shewing of synnes to þ preest: this is to say very, for he muste confesse him of all the condycions that belonge to his synne, as ferforth as he can: all must be sayd, and nothynge excused ne hyd, and not auaunt the of thy good werkes. Also it is necessarye to vnderstonde whence that sinnes spryng, & how they entre, and whiche they ben. Of the spryngynge of synnes saithe saynt Poule in this wyse: that right as by one man synne entred fyrste in to this worlde, and thrōughe sinne deth, right so the dethe entreth into all men that synne, and this man was Adam, by whom synne entred in to this worlde, whan he brake the cōmaundement of god. And therfore he that first was so mighty þ he ne shuld haue dyed, became so that he muste nedes dye whether he wolde or no, & all his progenye in thys worlde þ in the sayd man sinned. Loke that in the state of innocencie, whan Adam and Eue wer naked in paradyse, & shamed not therof, howe the serpēt wiliest of al other beestes that god made, sayd to the woman: Why cōmaūded god you that ye shuld not ete of euery tre in paradise? The woman answerd: Of the fruite said she of trees of paradyse we frede vs, but of the fruite of the myddle tree of paradise god forbode vs to ete and touche, lest we shulde die. The serpent sayd to the woman: Nay nay, ye shal not dye of dethe, for sothe god wote that what day that ye ete therof your eyen shal open, & ye shall be as goddes knowyng good & harme. The woman than sawe that the tree was good to fedynge, & fayre to the eyen, & delectable to syght, she toke of the fruyte of the tre and ete, & yaue to her husbond, and he ete, and anon the eyen of hem bothe opened: And whan that they knew that they were naked: they sowed of fygge leues i maner of breches to hyde her membres. There maye ye se that deedly synne hath first suggestion of the fende as sheweth here by þ adder, & afterward the delyte of the flesshe, as sheweth by Eue, & after that consentyng of reson, as sheweth by Adam. For trust wel though so it were that the fende tempted Eue, that is to say þ first, and the flesshe had delyte in the beutye of the fruite defended, yet erres til that reson, that is to say Adam, consented to the eting of the fruite, yet stode he in the state of innocēce. Of the said Adam toke we the said originall synne, for of him fleshly dyscended be we all, and engendred of vyle and corrupte matere: And whan the soule is put in our bodyes, right anon is contracte originall synne, and that that was erst but onely payne of concupiscence is afterwarde bothe payne and synne, & therfore we ben all borne sonnes of wrathe and of Dampnacion perdurable, yf it were baptyme þ we receyue, which benymmeth vs the coulpe but forsothe the pyne dwelleth with vs as to temptacion, whych pyne hyght Concupiscēce. This cōcupiscence whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordayned in man, it maketh him enuyete by coueitise of flesshe fleshely synne by syght of his eyen, as to erthly thynges, & all coueytyse of hyghnesse by pryde of hert.

Nowe as to speke of the fyrste coueitise that is concupiscence, after the lawe of our membres that were lawfully made, and by ryghtfull iugement of god, I saye, for asmoche as man is not obeysaunt to god that is his lord, therfore the flesshe to hi disobeyēt through concupiscence, whyche is called norisshynge of synne, and occasion of synne. Therefore all the whyle that a man hath within him þ pyne of cōcupiscence, it is impossyble but he be tempted somtime and wouud in his flesshe to synne. And this thinge maye not fayle as long as he lyueth. It maye well wexe feble by vertue of baptyme and by the grace of god thrōugh penitence, but fully ne shall it neuer quench that he ne shal sōtyme be moued in him self, but if he were all restrayned by sickenesse or by maiyer of sorcery or colde drinkes. For lo, what sayth saint Poule: the flesshe coueyteth ayenst the spirite, and the spirite agaynst the flesshe: they beue so contrary & so stryuen: that a man maye nat alway do as he wolde. The same saynt Poule, after his great penaunce in water and in londe: in water by nyght & by day, in great perill and in great payne. In hond, hunger and thurst, colde and clothles, and ones stoned almoste to dethe. Yet (say de he) alas, I caytife man, who shall deliuer me fro the pri-

sone

gne of my caytife bodye. And sayntę Jerom, whan he longe tyme had dwelled in deserte, where as he hadde no company but of wylde beestes, wher as he had no meate but herbes and water to drinke, ne no bedde but the naked erthe, wherfore his flesshe was blacke as an Ethiopien for hete, and nye distroyed for colde. Yet saide he that the brennynge of lechery boyled in al his body. Wherfore I wot well that they be disceyued that saye, they be nat tempted in her bodyes. Amines sayntę James that saith, that euery wight is tempted in his own conscience, that is to say: ỳ eche of vs hath mater & occasion to be tempted of ỳ norissyng of syn that is in his body. And therfore saith saint John the euangelyst: yf we say that we ben without synne we disceiue our selfe, & trouthe is nat in vs. Now shal ye vnderstonde how syn wexeth & encreseth i man. The fyrst thyng is the same norissyng of syn, of which I spake before, the fleshly concupiscence, and after that cometh suggestion of the deuil, this is to say the deuyls belous, wh which he bloweth in man the fire of cõcupiscence, and after that a man bethinketh hi whether he wol do or no, that thynge to whiche he is tempted. And than if a man withstõde & weyue ỳ fyrste mouyng of his flesshe & of the fende, than it is no syn, & if so be he do not, than feleth he anon a flame of delyte, & than it is good to beware and kepe him wel, or els he wol fal anon to cõsenteyng of syn, & than woll he do it, yf he may haue tyme and place. And of this mater sayth Moises by the deuyl, in this maner: the fende saithe, I woll chace & pursue man by wicked suggestion, & I wol take him by mouing and assentyng of syn, and I wol departe my prise of my praye by deliberacion, & my luste shall be accõplysshed in delyte, I wol draw my swerd in consenteynge. For certes, ryght as a swerde departeth a thing in two pertes, right so cõsenting departeth god fro man, & than wol I sle him with my honde in dede of syn: thus sayth the fende. For certes, than is a man al dead in soule, & thus is synne accõplysshed with tẽptation, by delyte & consenteyng: & than is the sinne actuell. Forsoth syn is in two maners, eyther it is venyall or deedlye synne. Sothlye whan man loueth any creature more thã Jesu christ our creatour, than it is deedly synne, & venyall synne it is, yf man loue Jesu Chryste lesse than him ought. Forsothe the dede of thys venyall synne is ful perylous, for it mynisheth the loue that man shulde haue to God more & more. And therfore if a man charge hym selfe with many suche venyall synnes: certes but if so be that he sõtyme discharge him of hem by shrifte. They maye full lyghtlye mynysshe in him all the loue that he hath to Jesu Christ, & in this wise shyppeth venial syn into deedly sin. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venyall synnes, the more he is enclyned to fall into deedlye synne. And therefore lette vs not be negligente to charge vs of venyal synnes. For the prouerbe saith, that many small make a greate. Herken thys ensample. A great waue of the see cometh sometyme with so great a violence, that it drowneth the shyppe. And the same harme dothe sometyme the small dropes of water that entreth through a lytell creuey, into ỳ tymbre and in to the botome of the shyppe, yf men be so negligente that they discharge hem not by tymes. And therfore all though there be a differẽce betwixt these two causes of drowning, algates the shyppe is drowned. Ryghte so fareth it somtyme of deedly synne and of anoyous venyall synnes, whan they multyplye in man so greatlye, that those worldly thynges that he loueth, through which he synneth venyally, is as great in his hert as the loue of god, or more: and therefore the loue of euery thyng that is not beset in god, ne done principally for Goddes sake, al thoughe that a man loue it lesse than God, yet is it venyall synne, and deedly synne whan the loue of any thyng weyeth in ỳ hert of man, as muche as the loue of God or more. Deedly synne as saith sayntę Justyn, is whan a man turneth his herte fro God, which ỳ is very soueraine bountie that may not chaunge, & yeueth his herte to thing that may chaunge & flytte: and certes that is euery thig saue god of heuen. For soth is that yf a man yeue his loue, whiche that he oweth to god with all his hert, vnto a creature, certes as moch of loue as he yeueth to that same creature, so moch he byreueth fro god, & therfore dothe he synne: For he that is dettour to god ne yeldeth not to god all his dette, ỳ is to say, all the loue of his herte. Now sythe man vnderstõdeth generally which is venyall syn, than it is conenable to tell specyally of synne, which that many a man peraventure deemeth hem no sinnes, & shryueth him not of the same thynges, & yet natheless they be sinnes sothly as these clerkes wryte, this is to say: At euery

sinne þ̄ man eateth or drinketh more than sufficeth to þ̄ sustenaunce of his body, in certain he doth synne: and also whan he speketh more than it nedeth, it is synne. Also whan he herkeneth not benignely the complaint of þ̄ poure: Also whan he is in heale of body and wol not faste whan other folke fast, without cause reasonable: also whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he cometh perchaunce to late to churche, or to other werkes of charite: Also whan he vseth his wife without soverain desyre of engēdrure to the honour of god, or for the entēt to yelde to his wife det of his body. Also whan he wol not vysyte the syeke or the prisoner, yf he maye. Also yf he loue wyfe or childe or other worldly thinge more thā reson requireth. Also if he flatter or blandyse more than him oughte for anye necessite. Also yf he minisshe or withdrawe þ̄ almesse of the poore. Also if he appetaile his mete more delicyously than nede is, or ete tohastely by yvrongousnes. Also if he talke vanitees at churche or at goddes seruice, or that he be a talker of ydle wordes of folye or vilany, for he shall yelde accōptes of it at the daye of dome. Also whan he behighteth or assureth to do thinges that he may not performe. Also whan that he by lightenesse or foly missayeth or scorneth his neyghbour. Also whan he hath any wycked suspection of thinge that he ne wote of sothfastnesse. These thinges & mo without nombre be synnes, as saithe sayne Justyn. Nowe shall men vnderstonde, that al be it so þ̄ non erthly man maye eschue al venyall synnes, yet maye he refrayne him by the brennyng loue that he hath to our lorde Jesu Christ, and by prayers and confessyon and other good workes, so that it shalbe but lytel grefe. For as saithe saint Augustyn. If a man loue god in such maner, that al that euer he dothe is the loue of god, or for þ̄ loue of God berelye, for he brenneth in the loue of god: loke howe moche that one droppe of water, whiche dothe fall into a greate fourneys full of fyre annoyeth or greueth the brennyng of the fyre: in lyke maner anoyeth or greueth a venyall synne vnto that mā whiche is stedfaste and perfyte in the loue of oure sauyour Jesu Christe. Ferthermore men maye also refrayne and put awaye venyall synne, by communyng and receyuyng worthely the body of our sauiour Jesu Christe. Also by takynge of holy water, by almesse dede, by generall confession of Confiteor at masse, and at Complyn, and by diuersynges of Wisshynges of prestes, and by other good workes.

De septem peccatis mortalibus, et de eorum dependentiis circumstantiis, et speciebus.

Nowe it is expedyente to tell, whiche bene the seuen deedly synnes, that is to saye, chefetayns of synnes. Al they renne in o lees, but in dyuers maners.

Now ben they called seuen Capes, for as moche as they be chefe, and spring of al other synnes. Of the roote of these seuen synnes, than is Pride the generall rote of all harmes. For of this rote springeth certayne braūches: as Ire, Enuye, Accidie or slouthe, Auarice or coueitise, to commen vnderstondynge glotony and lecherye: And eche of these chiefe synnes haue her braunches and twigges, as it shalbe declared in her chapiters folowynge. And though so be, þ̄ no mā can vtterly tel the nombre of twigges, and of the harmes that come of pryde. Yet woll I shewe a parte of hem, as ye shall vnderstonde. Ther is Inobedience, auauntyng, ypocrisy, dispite, arrogance, impudence, swellyng of hert, insolence, ejation, impacyence, stryfe, contumacy, presumpcyon, irreuerence, pertinacy, bygneglorye, and many other twigges that I can nat declare. Inobedience is he that disobeyeth for dyspite þ̄ commaundementes of god, to his soverayns, and to his gostly father. Inauncer is he that boasteth of the harme or of the boūte that he hath done. Ypocryte is he that hideth to shewe him suche as he is, and sheweth him to seme suche as he is nat. Dispitous is he that hath disdayne of his neighbour, that is to say, of his euyn christen, or hathe dispyte to do that him ought to do. Arrogance is he that thynketh that he hath those bounties in hi that he hath nat, or weneth that he shulde haue hem by his desertes, or els that he demeth he is that he is nat. Impedente is he, that for his pride hathe no shame of his pride ne synne. Swellynge of hert, is whan man reioyseth him of harme that he hath done. Insolence is he that dispiseth in his iugement al other folke, as in regarde of his value, of his conning, of his spekyng

lynge, and of his beringe. Elacion is when he ne may nat neither suffre to haue mayster ne felowe. Impacyence is he that woll not be taught ne rebuked of hys byce, and by strife dooyth trouth wityngly, and defendeth his folye. Contumpcae is he that thzough his indignacion is ayenst euery autozite oz powet of hem that ben hys souerayns. Pzesũpcion is whan a man vndertaketh an empzise that him ought not do oz els that he maye not do, and this is called surquidie. Irreuerence is, whan man dothe not honoure there as hym ought to do, and loke to be reuetenced. Pertinacy is when men defende her folye, a trust to muche on her owne witte. Vayneglozye is soz to haue pompe and delyte in his tempozel lynesse, and glozy hym in wozldely estates. Janglynge is when men speke to muche before folke and clappeth as a mylle, and take no kepe what they saye. And yet is there a pzety spice of pzyde, that wayteth firste to be salewed oz he wol salue, al be he lesse wozthy then that other is. And also he wayteth oz desireth to sytte, oz els to go aboue him in the way, oz kysse pace, to be encensed, oz go to offryng before his neighbour, and such semblable thinges ayenst his duety peraũture, but that he hath his hert and his entent, in such a pzoude desire, to be magnified and honoured before the people. Nowe been there two maner of pzides. One of hem is within the herte of a man, and that other is without. Of whiche forsayd thinges sothly and mo than I haue sayd apertayne to pzide, that is in the hert of man, a other spices of pzide been without, but narbeles, that one of these spices of pzide is signe of that other, right as the gay leuesel at the tauerne, is signe of the wine that is in the celer. And this is in manye thynges: as in speche & coũtenaunce, & outragious araye of clothyng: soz certes, if there had ben no sinne in clothyng, Chzist wouldе not so soone haue noted and spoken of the clothynge of ỳ ryche men in the gospell. And as sayne Greg. sayth that pzecious clothynge is coulpable, soz the bertbe of it and soz his softnesse, and soz hys straungeneste and disguysinge: And soz the superfluite, oz soz the inozdynate scantnesse of it. Alas, may nat a man se as in our dayes the synfull costlewe array of clothynge, and namely in to muche superfluite, oz els in to disordinate scantnesse. As to the firste synne in superfluyte of clothynge, suche that maketh it so dere to the harme of the people, nat onely the coste of embzaudzing, the disguised endentynge, oz barryng, oundynge, palynge, wyndynge, oz bendyng, and semblable waste of clothe in vanyte. But there is also the costlewe furryng in her gownes, so muche poũsyng of chesel to make hooles, so muche daggyng of theres forche, with the superfluite in length of the forsayd gownes, traylyng in the donge and in the mire, on horse and also on fote, as wel of manne as of woman. That all that traylynge is verely as in effecte wasted, consumed tredebare and rotten with donge, rather than it is yeue to the pore, to great dõmage of the forsayde poore folke, and that in sondzie wyse, this is to say: that the more the clothe is wasted, the more must it coste to the poore people soz the scarsenesse. And moreouer, if so be that they wolde yeue suche poũsed and dagged clothynge to the poore people, it is nat cõuenient to were soz her estate, ne sufficyent to her necessite, to kepe hem fro the distemperaunce of the firmament.

Upon that other syde, to speke of the horrible disordinate scantnesse of clothynge, as been these cutted sloppes oz hanselynes, ỳ thzough her shortnesse couer not the shameful mẽbzes of man, to wicked entent. Alas, some of hem shewe the bosse of her shap, and the horrible swole membzes that semeth lyke the malady of Hernia, in the wzappyng of her hosen, and also the buttockes of hem fare as it were the hider part of a she ape in the ful of the moone. And more ouer the wzetched swolen mẽbzes that they shewe thzough disguisyng, in departyng of her hosen, in white & reed semeth that halfe her shamefull pzivy mẽbzes were flayn And if so be that they departe her hosen in other colours, as is white and blewe, oz white and blacke oz blacke and reed, and so forthe: Than semeth it as by bariaunce of coloure ỳ the halfe parte of her pzivy membzes, ben corrupte by the fire of sayne Anthony, oz by canker, oz other suche mischaũce. Of the hynder part of the buttockes it is ful horryble for to se, for certes in ỳ partye of her body there as they purge her stinking ordure, that foule partie shew they to the people pzoudly in dispite of honestie, whiche honestie that Jesu Chzist and his frendes obserued to shewe in her life. Now as to the outragious araye of women, god wote that though the bisages of some of hem seme full chaste & debonayze, yet notyfye

in her aray or atyre, ypocrisie & pride: I say not þ honeste clothing of man or woman is vncouenable, but certes the superfluite of disordinat quātite of clothing is reprouable. Also the synne of ornement or of apparayle is in thynges that apperteyne to vsynge, as in company, delycate horses that ben holden for delyte, that ben so faire, fatte, & costlewe, and also in many a vyce knaue, that is sustayned bycause of hem, in curious harneys, as in sadels, cropers, peytrels, & bridels couered in precious clothyng, & riche barres of plates of golde & of siluer. For whiche god saith by zacharie the prophete, I wol confounde the ryders of suche horses. These folke take litel regarde of the ridyng of goddes sonne of heuē, and of his harneis when he rode vpon þ asse, and had non other harneis but the poore clothes of his disciples, ne we rede not that euer he rode on other best. I speke this for the synne of superfluite, and not for resonable honeste, when reason it requireth And more ouer, certes pride is greatly notyfied in holdynge of great meyne, when they ben of lytell profyte or of right no profite, and namely when that meyne is felonous & dāmageous to the people by hardynesse of high lordshyp, or by way of offices. For certes suche lordes sell than her lordshyppe to the deuyll of hell, whan they sustayne the wickednesse of her meyne. Or elis, whan these folke of lowe degre: as those that kepe hostelryes, susteyne the estre of her hostellers, and that is in manye maner of disceytes: those maner of folke ben the flyes that folowe the hony, or elis the houndes that folowe the caryon. Suche forsayd folke strāgel spirituelly her lordshyps: For suche, thus saith Dauid the prophet. Wicked deth might come on those lordshippes, and god yeue that they might descende in to hell, all downe, all downe: For in her houses ben iniquities and wyckednesse, and not god of heuen. And certes, tyll they done amendement, right as god yaue hys blessyng to Pharao by the seruyce of Ioseph, and to Laban by the seruyce of Iacob: Right so god wol yeue hys curse to suche lordshippes, as sustayne þ wickednesse of her seruauntes, but they come to amēdement Pride of the table appereth also ful ofte: for certes, riche men ben called to festes, & poore folke ben put awaye and rebuked. And also in excesse of dyuers meates and dyshes, and namely suche maner bake meates and dishe metes bremynge of wylde fyre: peynted and castelled with paper and semblable waste, so that it is abusyon to thynke. And also in to great preciousnesse of vessell, & curiosite of mynstraley, by which a man is sterred more to delyces of lechery, if so be that he sette hys herte the lesse vpon our lorde Jesu Christe, certayn ly it is a synne. And certenly the delyces myght be so great in thys case, þ a man might lightly fall by hem in to a deedly synne. Ther ben certes that surde of pride, forthy what they sourde of malyce ymagyned, auysed, & fore caste, or elis of vsage ben deadly synne, it is no bourde. And when they sourde by freelte vnauysed sodenly, and sodenly withdrawe ayen, all be they greuous sinnes, I gesse that they be not deedly. Nowe myght men aske, wherof that pride sourdeth and springeth. I say that some tyme it springeth of the goodes of nature, some tyme of the goodes of fortune, and some tyme of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden onely in goodes of body, or goodes of þ soule. Certes goodes of body be heel of body, strength, delyuernesse beaute, gentrye, franchise. Goodes of nature of the soule, ben good wit sharpe vnderstōdinge, subtel engin, vertue naturel, good memory. Goodes of fortune, be ryches, hye degrees of lordshyps, praysinges of the people. Goodes of grace: ben science, power to suffice spūrell vertue, benigne, vertuous cōtēplacion, vnderstōdyng, of tēptacion, & semblable thinges: of whiche forsayd goodes: certes it is a ful grete folye, a man to haue pryde in anye of hem all. Nowe, as for to speake of goodes of nature, god wote þ somtyme we haue hem in nature asmuch to our domage as to our profit. As to speke of heel of body, truly it passeth ful lightly, & also it is ful ofte occasyon of sickenesse of the soule: for god wote þ flesche is a great enmy to the soule: & therfore þ more þ the body is hole, the more we be in peryl to fal. Also for to haue pride in hys strength of body, it is an hye folye: for certes the flesh coueteth ayenst the spirite: & the more strong þ the flesche is, þ sorrer may the soule be. And ouer al this strength of body & worldly hardynesse, causeth full ofte manye man to peryll & mischaūce, & also to haue pride of his gentry, is right great folye: for ofryme þ gentry of the body, taketh awey the gentry of the soule: & also we ben all of o father and mother: & all we been of o nature, rotten & corrupt, bothe riche & poore. Forforth

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a maner gentry is for to praise, that appartrith mannes courage. Wytte, vertue, a moyst, maketh hym Christes chylde. For truste wel, that ouer what man that syn hath mastry, he is a very chorle to synne.

Now ben there generall signes of gentylesse: as eschewyng of vyce & rybaudrye, and vsage of synne: in worde, in werke, and cõtynuance and vsyng of vertue, curtesy, and debonayre, and to be lyberall: that is to saye, large by measure: for that that passeth measure, is foly and syn: Another is to remembre him of bounte, that he of other folke hathe receyued: Another is to be benygne to hys good subiectes. Wherefore saith Senecke: there is nothynge more conenable to a man of hyghe estate, than debonayre and pite. And therefore these flyes that men call bees, whan they make her hynge, they chese one that hathe no prycke, wherwith he may stynge.

Another is, man to haue a noble herte and a dilygent, to attayne to the hyghe vertuous thynges. Now certes, a man to haue pryde in the goodes of grace, is also an outragious foly: for those giftes of grace that shulde haue tourned hym to goodnesse, and to medycyne, tourneth him to venym and confusyon, as saith saynt Gregory. Certes also, who so hath pryde in the goodesse of fortune, he is a full great fole: for somtime is a man in a great lorde by the morne, that is a caytife & a wrecche or it be nyghte: and somtyme the riches of a man is cause of his death. Somtyme the delyces of a man, is cause of greuous maladye through which he dyeth. Certes, the commendacion of the people is, somtyme ful false and hotel for to trust. Thys day they prayse, to morowe they blame. God wote, desire to haue cõmẽdacion of ỳ people, hath caused dethe to many a busy man. Nowe sythe that so is, that ye haue vnderstonde what is pryde, and whiche be the speces of it, and whence it sourdeth and springeth: nowe ye shall vnderstõde whiche is the remedy ayenst it. Humilyte or meknesse is the remedy ayenst pryde, that is a vertue, through whiche a man hathe verye knowlege of him selfe, & holdeth of hym selfe no pryce ne dayntie, as in regarde of hys desertes, considerynge euer his freelte. Now ben there thre maner of humylites: As humylyte in herte, another humylite is in mouthe, and the thirde is in workes. The humylite in hert is in four maners: That one is, whan a man holdeth him self as nought worth before god of heuen. The seconde is, whan he dispiseth non other man. The thirde is, whan he ne recketh nat, though men holde him nought worthe. And the fourth is, whan he is not sory of his humiliacion. Also the humilite of mouthe is in foure thynges. In a temperate speche, in humilite of speche, and when he confesseth with his owne mouth, that he is such as him thynketh, that he is in hys herte: Another is when he praiseth the bounte of another man and nothynge therof miniscth. Humilite also in werke, is in foure maners. The firste is, when he putteth other men before him, the secõde is to chese the lowest place ouer all, the thirde is, gladly to assent to good counsayle, the fourth is, to stonde gladly to the a warde of his soueraynes, or of him that is in hier degre: Certayn this is great werke of humilite

¶ De Inuidia.

After pryde wol I speke of the foule synne of Enuy, whiche that is after the worde of the Philosofer, sorowe of other mennes prosperite. And after the worde of saynt Austyn: it is the sorowe of other mennes wele, and the ioy of other mennes harme. Thys foule sinne is platly ayenst the holye ghoste: All be it so, that euery synne is ayenste the holy goste: Yet natheleste, for as muche as bounte apertaineth properly to the holy gost: and enuy cometh properlye of malyce, therfore it is properly ayenst ỳ boũte of ỳ holy gost. Now hath malyce two spyces, that is to saye, hardinesse of herte in wickednes, or els the slethe of a man is so blynde, that he considreth nat that he is in syn, or recketh not that he is in synne, whiche is the hardinesse of the deuyll. That other spyce of Enuy is, when that a man denyeth trouth, when he knoweth ỳ it is trouth and also when he repẽteth the grace that god hath yeue to his neyghbour: & al this is by enuy. Certes, than is enuy the worst synne that is, for sothly al other sinnes be somtime onely ayenst o speciall vertue: but certes, enuy is ayenst al vertues and al goodnesse. For it is sory ayenst al the bountes of her neighboure, and in this maner, it is dyuers from al other synnes. Alas: for there ne is anye synne that it ne hath some delite in it selfe, saue only enuye

wye, that euer hath in it selfe anguishe and sorowe. The speces of Enuye been these: there is first sorow of other mennes goodnesse and of her prosperyte, and prosperyte is kyndely mater of ioye: Than is Enuye a synne ayenste kynde. The seconde spece of Enuye, is ioye of other mennes harm, & that is properly like to the deuyl, that euer reioyseth hym of mannes harme. Of these two speces cometh backbytyng, and this sinne of backbytinge or detracting hath certain speces, as thus: Some mā prayseth his neighbour by a wicked entēt for he maketh alway a wicked knot at ꝑ laste ende: alway he maketh a but at the last ende that is digne of more blame, than is worth al the ypayspnge. The seconde spece is, that if a mā be good, or doth or sayth a thyng to good entent, the backbyter wol turne al that goodnesse vp so downe: to hys shrewde entent. The thirde is to amonish the boūtye of hys neyghbour. The fourthe spece of backbytynge is this, ꝑ if men speke goodnesse of a man, than wol the backbyter saye: Perfay suche a mā is yet better than he, i displayinge of him ꝑ menne prayse. The fyfthe spece is this, for to conseī gladly and herke gladly to the harme that men speke of other folke: This synne is ful great, & aye encreseth after the wicked entent of ꝑ backbyter. After backbiting cometh grutchinge or murmuracion, and sometyme it springeth of impacience ayenst god, and sometyme ayenst manne. Ayenst god it is whan a man grutcheth ayenst payne of hell, or ayenst pouertye, or losse of catell, or ayenst rayne or tempest, or elis grutcheth ꝑ shrewes haue prosperite, or elis for that good men haue aduersyte: & al these thynges shulde men suffre patiently, for they come by the ryghtful iugemēt and ordinaunce of god. Sometyme cometh grutchyng of auarice, as Judas grutched ayenst Maudeleyn, whā she anoynted the heed of our lorde Jesu Christe, with her precious oyntment. Thys maner murmuryng is such as whan man grutcheth of goodnesse ꝑ hym selfe doth, or that other folke done of her own catell. Sometyme cometh murmure of pryde, as whan Simon ꝑ pharise grutched ayenst Maudeleyn whē she aprochedto Jesu Christ and wept at his fete for her synnes. And sometyme it sourdeth of enuy, whan men discouer a mans harme that was priuy, or beteth him on bonde thyng that is falce. Murmure also is ofte among seruaunts that grutche when her sourraines bydde hem do lefull thynges, and for as moche as they dare not openly withsay the cōmaundement of her sourraines, yet wol they say harme and grutche & murmure pryuely for very dyspyte: which wordes they call the dyuels pater noster, though so be that the dyuell had neuer pater noster, but ꝑ lewde folke yeueth it such a name. Sometyme it cometh of yre or priuy hate, that norysheth rancour in ꝑ herte, as afterwarde I shal declare. Than cometh also bytternesse of herte, thorowe which bitternes euery good dede of his neyghbour semeth to him bytter & vnsauory. Than cometh discorde that vnbyndeth al maner of frendshyp. Than cometh scornynge of his neyghboure, all do he neuer so well. Than cometh accusyng, as whan man seketh occasyon to anoye his neyghboure, wherche is lyke the crafte of the deuel, that wayteth both day and nyght to accuse vs all. Than cometh malignyte, throughe whiche a man anoyeth hys neyghbour priuely if he may: and yf he may not, algate his wicked wyl shall not let as for to brenne his house priuely, or empoyson or sle his beestes, and semblable thynges. Nowe wol I speke of the remedye ayenst this foule synne of enuye. First is the loue of god principally, and louyng of his neyghbour as hym selfe: for sothly that one ne may not be without that other. And trust wel that in the name of thy neyghbour thou shalt vnderstande the name of thy brother, for certes al we haue one father fleshly and one mother, that is to saye Adam & Eue, and also one father spyrytuall, that is god of heuen. Thy neighbour art thou boūde for to loue, and wyll him all goodnesse, and therfore sayth god: Loue thy neyghbour as thy selfe, that is to saye, to saluation both of lyfe and soule. And more ouer thou shalt loue him in worde & in benigne admonesshing and chastysynge, and comfort him in his noyaunces, & pray for him with al thy herte. And in dede thou shalt loue him in suche wyse that thou shalt do to him in charyte, as thou woldest that it were done to thyn own persō: and therfore thou ne shalte do him no domage in wicked worde, ne harme in his body ne in his catel, ne in his soule by enticyng of wicked ensample. Thou shalte not desyre hys wyfe ne none of hys thynges. Understond also that in the name of neyghbour is comprehended his enemy: Certes man shall loue hys enemye by the cōmaundemēt of god: & sothly thy frende

thou

thou shalte loue in god. I saye thyne enemye, shalt thou loue for goddes sake, by hys commaundement, for if it were reason that man shulde hate his enemy, forsothe god nolde not commune vs to his loue that been his enemies. Ayenst thre maner of wronges ꝑ hys enemye doth to him, he shal do thre thinges, as thus: ayenst hate and rancour of hert, he shall loue him in hert: Ayenst chiding & wicked wordes he shall praye for his enemye: Ayenst wycked dedes, he shal do him boûte. For Christ saith: Loue your enemyes, and praye for hem that sprke you harme, and for hem that chace and pursue you: and do bountye to hem that hate you. Lo, thus cõmaundeth vs our lorde Jesu Christ to do to our enemyes: Forsothe nature lerneth vs to loue our frendes, & parfay oure enemyes haue more nede of loue than our frẽdes, & they that more nede haue, certes to hem shal mẽ do goodnesse. And certes in that dede haue we remembraunce of the loue of Jesu Christe that dyed for his enemyes: And in as muche as that loue is more greuous to performe, so much is the more gret the merite, and therfore the louyng of our enemye hathe confounded the deuyls benym: For ryght as the deuyl is confounded by humilite, right so is he wounded to the deth by the loue of our enemy, certes thã is loue the medicyn that casteth out the benym of enuye fro mans herte. The spices of this place shal be more largely declared in her chapyters folowyng.

¶ De Ira.

After Enuye woll I discryue the syn of Ire, for sothly who so hath Enuy vpon his neighbour, anone he woll comenlye fynde hym a mater of wrathe in word or in dede, ayenst him to whome he hath enuye: And as wel cometh ire of pryde as of enuye, for sothly he that is proude or enuyous is lyghtly wrothe

This sin of yre, after the discrymynge of saynt Austyn is wicked wyl to be auẽged by worde or by dede. Ire after the Philosopher, is the feruent blode of man yquicked in hys herte, through which he wold harme to him that he hateth: for certes the herte of man by eschaufyng & mouing of his bloode, wexeth so troubled, that it is out of al of maner iugement of reason. But ye shall vnderstonde that Ire is in two maners, that one of hem is good, and that other is wicked. The good ire is by ielousye of goodnes through which a mã is worth with wickednesse, & ayenst wickednesse. And therfore saith a wise man, that ire is bet than playe. This ire is with debonairte, and it is worth without bitternesse, not wrothe ayenst the man, but wrothe with the misdede of the man: As sayth the prophete Dauid: Irascimini, et nolite peccare. Now vnderstõde that wicked ire is in two maners, that is to saye, sodayne ire or hasty ire without auysement & consentyng of reason: The meanynge and the sence of this is, that the reson of a man ne cõsent not to that sodeyne ire, and than it is venyall. Another ire is ful wicked, that cometh of felonye of hert, auised and cast before, with wicked wyl to do vengeaunce, and therto his reson cõsenteth: and sothly this is deedly sin. This ire is so displesaunt to god, that it troubleth his house, and chaseth the holy goste out of mans soule, and wasteth & distroyeth that likenesse of god, that is to say, the vertue that is in mans soule, and putteth in him the lykenesse of the deuyl, and taketh the man fro god that is his rightful lorde. This is a ful great pleasaunce to the deuil, for it is the deuils forneys that is eschauffed with the fyre of hell: For certes ryght so as fire is more mighty to distroy erthly thynges than any other elemẽt, right so ire is mighty to distroye al spyrytuel thynges. Loke howe that fyre of smale coles that been almoste deed vnder ashen, woll revyue or quicke ayen when they been touched wb brimstone, right so ire wol euer more quicken ayen whẽ it is touched by the pride that is coueted in mans herte. For certes fire ne maye not come out of nothyng, but if it were fyrste in ꝑ same thing naturally: as fyre is drawen out of flyntes with steel. And right so as pryd is many tymes mater of ire, ryght so is rancour norice and keper of Ire. There is a maner tree, as sayth saynt Isodore, that whan a man makyth fyre of the sayde tree, and couer the coles of it with ashen, sothly the fyre of it woll laste a yere or more: And right so fareth it of rancour when it is ones conceyued in the hertes of some men, certes it woll laste peraduenture from one Ester day vntyll an other Ester day or more. But certes the same man is ful ferre from the mercy of god al ꝑ while.

In thys forsayd deuyls forneys ther forge thre shrewes: Pryde that aye bloweth and encreaseth, the fire by chyding and wicked wordes:

Deth: Than stondeth enuye and holdeth hotre ryon in the eyze vpon the herte of man with a payze of long tongez of longe rancoure. And than stondeth the synne of cõtumelie oz stryfe and chefte, and battereth and forgeth by vylaynous reprevynges. Certes this cursed syn anoyeth bothe to the man hym selfe and also hys neyghboure. For sothely almoste all the harme oz damage that any man dothe to hys neighbour commeth of wzath: for certes outcagious wzathe dothe all that euer the soule frende wyllyeth oz cõmaundeth him, for he nesparyth neyther our lozde Jesu Chzist, nether his swete mother. And in his outtagious angre and yze, alas alas, full manye and dyuers at that tyme, frieth in his herte full wickedlye bothe of Chzistе and also of all his halowes: Is not this a cursed byte? yes certes. Alas it taketh fro man his witte and his reason, and all his debonayze lyfe spirituell that shoulde kepe his soule. Certes it withdzawerh also goddes dewe lozdshyp, that is mans soule, and the loue of his neyghboures. It stryuerh also al daye ayenst trouthe, it reuerh hym the quyete of his herte, and subuertеth his soule

Of yze cometh these stynking engendzures. First hate, þ is olde wzath, Discorde, through whyche a man forsaketh his olde frende that he hath loued full longe. And than commethe werre and euery maner of wzõge that a man dothe to his neyghboure in body oz in catell.

Of this cursed synne of yze cometh also manslaughter. And vnderstonde well that homycide, that is manslaughter is in dyuers wyse:

Some maner of homycide is spirituell, and some is bodely. Spirituel manslaughter is in.bi.thynges. First by hate as sayth saynte Johan: He that hateth hys bzother, is an homicide. Homicide is also by backbityng, of whiche backbityng sayth Salomon, that they haue two swerdes, wyth whych they sle her neyghbours: For sothely as wicked is to take fro him his good name as his lyfe. Homicide is also in yeuynge of wycked counsell by fraude, as for to yeue counsayle to arryse wzongful customes, and talages. Of whiche saith Salomon: A Lyon rozinge and a Berre hungrye, be lyke to the cruell Lozdes in with holdyng oz abzedgyng of the shepe oz the hire of the wages of seruauntes, oz elles in vsurye, oz in wythdzawynge of the almesse of goode folke. For whiche the wyse man sayth. Fede hym that almoste dyeth for honger, for sothly but if ye fede hym ye slee hym. And all these been deedly synnes. Bodely manslaughter is when thou sleest hym with thy tonge: In other maner is, when thou commaundest to slee a man, oz elles yeuest counsayle to slee a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maners. That one is by lawe, right as a Justyce dampneth hym that is culpable to the deth. But let the Justyce bewarе that he do it rightfully, and that he do it not for hyre to spyll blode, but for keppynge of rightwysnesse. An other homicide is done for necessyte, as when a man sleeth an other in his defence, and that he ne may none other wyse escape without slaughter of his aduersarye, he doth synne, and he shall beare penaunce as for deedly synne. Also yf a man by caste oz aduenture shote an arrowe oz caste a stone, with which he sleeth a man, he is an homicide. Also if a woman by negligẽce ouerlieth her childe in her slepynge, it is homicide & deedly sinne. Also whan man disturbleth conceyuyng of a chylde, and maketh a woman eyther barayne by drinkynge of venemous herbes, through whiche she may not cõceyue, oz sleeth a childe by drynkes, oz elis putteth certayne materiall thynges in her secret places to sle the chylde, oz elis doth vnkyndly synne, by which a man oz a woman shedeth her nature in maner of in a place there as a chylde maye not be conceyued. Oz elis yf so be that a woman bathe conceyued, and hurteth her selfe, and by that mishappe the chylde is slayne, yet it is homicide. What say we of those women that murdren her children for dyeaute of eschewynge of worldely shame? Certes it is an horryble homicide. Homicide is also if a manne approche to a woman by desyre of lechery, through whiche þ childe is perished, oz elis smiteth a woman wittyngly, through whiche she leseth her chylde: All these been homicides and horrible deedly synnes. Yet come there of inmo sinnes, as well in worde as in thought, and dede. As he that arreeth vpon god, oz blameth god of the thyng of which he is him selfe gylty, oz dispyseth god and al hys halowes, as don the cursyd vsardours in diuers cõtreys: This cursyd synne don they, whan they sele in her herte ful wickedly of god and of hys halowes. Also when they trete vnreuerẽtly the sacrament of the auter, that sinne is so greet that vnneth it may be released, but that the merey of god passeth al his werkes,

it is

is so great and he so benygne. Than cometh of ire an arterly angre, whan a man is harply amoneshed in his shrift to leaue his synne: Than wol he be angrye, and answere shortly and angerly, or defende or excuse his synne by vnstedfastnesse of his flesshe, or els he lyd it for to holde companye with his felowes, or els he sayth the fende enticed him, or els he doth it for his youthe, or els his complexion is so corragious that he may not forbeare, or els it is his destenye he saith vnto a mannes age, or els he saith it cometh him of gentylnesse of hys auncesters, and semblable resones. All these maner of folke so wrappe hem in her synnes, that they ne woll not delyuer hemselfe: For soothly no wight that excuseth him self wilfully of his synne, maye not be delyuered of his synne tyll that he meekely knowleth his synne. After thys than cometh swearynge, that is expresse ayenste the commaundement of god, and this befalleth often of angre and of ire. God sayth. Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord god in vayne or in ydell. Also oure lorde Jesu Christ sayth by the worde of sainte Mathew: Ne will ye not swere in al maner, neyther by heven, for it is goddes trone, ne by erth, for it is the benche of his fete, ne by Hierusalem, for it is the cite of a great kyng, ne by thyn heed, for thou mayste not make an heere neyther white ne blacke: but saye by youre worde, ye ye, naye, naye: and what that is more, it is of yvel. Thus sayth Christe for Christes sake forbeed not so synfully in dysmembrynge of Christ: By soule, herte, bones, and body, for semeth it semeth that ye thinke that the cursed Jewes ne dismembred not ynoughe the precious person of Christ, but ye dismembre him more. And yf so be that the lawe compell you to swere, thā ruleth you after the law of god in your swerynge, as sayth Jeremye. iiii. cap. Thou shalte kepe thine ooth vnto goddeyons, thou shalt swere in trouthe, in dome and in ryghtwisenesse, this is to saye, thou shalte swere soth. For every lesynge is ayenst Christ, for Christe is verye trouthe. And thynke wel this that every great swearer not compelled lawfully to swere, the plage shal not departe fro his house, while he vseth suche vnlefull swearynge. Thou shalte swere also in dome, whan thou art constreyned by thy domes man to witnesse trouthe: Also thou shalt not swere for envye, neyther for favour, nether for mede, or rewarde, but onely for ryght wisnesse and for declarynge of it to the honour and worshyppe of god, and to the aydynge and helpe of thyne euyn Christen. And therfore euerye man that taketh goddes name in ydell, or falsely sweareth with his mouthe, or els taketh on him þ name of Christe to be called a Christen man, and lyueth ayenst Christes lyuynge and hys techinge, all they take goddes name in ydell. Loke also what sayth sayn̄t Peter, Actuum iiii. capitu. Non est aliud nomen sub celo. &c. There is none other name sayth saint Peter vnder heuen yeue to men, in whych they may be saued, that is to say, but the name of Jesu Christe. Take hede eke howe precyous is the name of Jesu Christe, as saith sayntē Poule, ad Philipenses. ii. In nomine Jesu. &c. That in the name of Jesu euery kne of heuenly creatures, erthly, and of hell shulde bowe, for it is so hye and so worshypfull, that the cursed fende in hell shulde tremble to here it named. Than semeth it that men that swere so horribly by hys blessed name, that they dispyse it more boldely than the cursed iewes, or els the dyuel that trembleth whan he hereth his name.

Nowe certes sythe that swearing, but if it be lawfully done, is so hyely defended: moche more is forswering falsely, and yet nedelesse.

What say we also of hem that delyte hem in swearyng, and holde it a gentrye or a manly dede to swere great othes? And what of hem that of very vsage ne cease not to sweare gret othes, all be the cause not worthe a strawe? Certes this is horryble synne. Swearyng so deinly is also a great syn. But let vs go nowe to that horryble synne swearynge of adiuracion & cōiuracyon, as done these false enchantours or nigramācers in balsyng ful of water, or in a bright swerde, in a cercle, in a fyre, or in the sholderbone of a shepe? I can not saye but that they done cursedly and dampnably ayenst Christ, & al the faythe of holy churche.

What saye we of hem that byleue on Deuinales, as by flyght or by noyse of bryddes or of beestes, or by sorte, by Geomancie, by dreames, by chirkyng of doores or crakyng of houses, by gnawyng of rattes, and suche manere wyerchydnesse? Certes all these thynges bene defended by god and holy churche, for which they ben accursed tyl they come to amendemēt that on suche fyshe sette her byleue. Charmes for woundes or maladye of men or of beestes, if they take any effecte, it may be paraventure that god suffreth it, for folke shulde yeue the more fayth & reuerence to his name.

Now wol I speke of leasinges which generally is falle signifyaunce of wordes in entent to deceyue his euen cristen. Some leasyng is of whiche there cometh none auauntage to no wyght, and some leasynge turneth to the profyte or ease of a man, and to the damage of a nother man. A nother leasyng is for to saue his lyfe or his catel, which cometh of delyte for to lye, in whyche delyte they wol forge a longe tale, & peynt it wyth all circumstaunces, where all the tale of the grounde is falce. Some leasyng cometh for he will sustayne his wordes: Some leasyng cometh of recheleesnesse wythoute auysement, and semblable thynges. Lette vs nowe touche the vyce of flaterye, whiche ne cometh not gladly but for drede, or for coueityse. Flaterye is generally wrongfull playsyng. Flaterers ben the dyuels nourryces, that norysshe his chyldren with mylke of losyngerye: For soth Salomon sayth that flaterye is worse than detraction, for somtyme detractyon maketh an hauteyne man be the more humble, for he dreth detraction, but certes flaterye maketh a man enhaunce his herte and his countenaunce. Flaterers be the dyuels enchauntours, for they make a man to wene him selfe be lyke, that he is not lyke. Those be lyke to Judas that betrayn a man to sel hi to his enemy. Flaterers ben the dyuels chapeleyns that euer synge Placebo. I reken flaterye in the vyces of yre: for ofte tyme yf a man be wrothe with a nother, than will he flatter some wyghte to sustayne hym in hys quarell. Spoke we nowe of suche cursynge as cometh of frouse herte. Malesson generally may be sayd euery maner power of harme: Suche cursinge destroyeth man fro the reigne of God, as sayth sayncte Poule. And ofte tyme suche cursynge wrongfully returneth ayen to hym that curseth, as a bryde that turneth ayen to his owne nest. And ouer all thyng men ought eschewe to curse her chyldre and preest to the dyuel her engendrure as ferre forthe as in hem is: certes it is great perill & great synne. Let vs than speake of chydynge and reprocche, whiche ben full great wonders in mans herte, for they vnto we the fruites of frendshyp in mannes herte: for certes vneth maye a man playnlye be accorded wyth hym, that him openly hathe reuyled and repreued, and dyscraundred: This is a full foolysh synne as Cristes sayth in the gospell. And take hede wowe that he that reprenyeth his neyghbourre, eyther he reprenethe hym by some harme of payne that he hath vpon his bodye, as meselle, croked, harlot, or by some synne that he wot. Nowe yf he reprene hym by harme of payne, than turneth the reprefe to Jesu Christe: for payne is sende by the righte wise sonde of god, and by his sufferaunce, be it meseiry, meyme, or maladye: And yf he reprene hym vnchastysably of synne, as thou holour, thou dronkelewe harlot, and so forthe. Than perteyneth that to the vicoryynge of the dyuell, whyche euer hath ioy that men done synne. And vertes chydyng maye not come but of vilanous herte, for after the habundaunce of the herte speketh the mouthe full ofte. And ye shall vnderstonde, that lorde by any waye whan any man shal chastyse or correcte another, that he beware from chidyng or reprenyng: for trewly but he beware, he may full lyghtly quicken the fyre of angre and of wrathe, whyche he shulde quenche: And peraduenture sleeth him whiche he myght chastyse with benignyte. For as saith Salomon: The amiable tonge is the tree of lyfe, that is to sayn, of lyfe spirituell. And forthy a dyssolute tonge sleeth the spirites of hym that reprenyeth, and also of hi which is reprened. Lo, what saith saincte Augustyn: There is nothyng so lyke the dyuels chylde, a[illegible]e whiche ofte chydeth.

A seruaunt of god behoueth not to chide. And though that chydynge be a vylaynous thyng bewyxt all maner folke, yet it is certes most vnconuenable bitwene a man and his wife, for there is neuer rest. And therfore sayth Salomon: An house that is vncouered and dropping and a chydyng wyfe, ben a lyke.

A man whiche is in a droppynge house in many places, thoughe he eschewe the droppynge in o place, it droppeth on hym in another place: So fareth it by a chydyng wyf: yf she chyde hym in one place she will chyde him in a nother. And therfore better a greate mese plesaunte of a morsell of lyfell gouerned with ioye, than an house fylled full of delyces wyth chydyng and gruchynge, sayth Salomon. Sayncte Poule sayth: O ye wyues men, beth ye subgette to your husbondes, as you behoueth and ought in god: And ye husbondes loueth your wyues, ad Colonienses. iii.

Afterward speke we of scornyng which is a wycked synne, and namelye whan he scorneth a man for hys good werkes: For certes suche scorners fare lyke the foule Tode, that

maye

may not enbrace to smell the swete sauour of the hyne whan it flouryssheth. These foure ben pestrynge felawes with the dyuel, for they loue alwey whan the dyuell wynneth, and wayte if he lese. They bene aduersaryes of Jesu Christ, for they hate that he loueth, that is the saluacion of soule.

Loke we nowe of wicked counsayle, the whyche is a craftynge, for he dyspeyreth hym that trusteth in hym: Vt Achitofel ad Salomonem. But natheless, yet is hys wycked counsayle first ayenst hym selfe, for as sayethe the wyse man: euery falce lyuinge hath this propertie in hym selfe, that he that woll anoye another man, he anoyeth first hym selfe.

And men shall vnderstonde, that man shal not take his counsayle of false folkes, ne of folke that loue specially to moche worldlye ioye, namelye in mayntaynyng of soules.

Nowe cometh the synne of hem that sowe and make dyscorde amonge folke, whiche is a synne that Christ hateth vtterly, and no wonder is: for he deyde for to make concorde. And more shame hathey to Christe than dyd they that him crucifyed: for god loueth better that fraternyte be amonges folke than he dyd his owne bodye, whyche that he gaue for vnyte. Therfore ben they lykened to the deuell that is alwaye to make dyscorde. Now cometh the synne of double tonge, such as speke fayre before folke, and wyckedly behynde, or els they make semblaūt as though they spake of good entencyon, or els in game and playe, and yet they speke of wycked entente.

Nowe commeth bewrayeng of counsaile, through whyche a man is defamed: Cestes lawes may be restore the damage. Nowe cometh menace, that is an open folye, for he that ofte menaceth, he threteth more than he may performe full ofte tyme. Nowe cometh vayn wordes, that is without profyte of him that speketh the wordes, & also of him that herkeneth the wordes: Or els ydell wordes ben suche that bene nedelesse or without entent of vayn profyte. And al be it that ydel wordes be sometyme venyal syn, yet shulde men doute hem, for we shall yeue rekenynge of hem before God. Nowe cometh iangelynge that may not be withoute synne. And as sayethe Salomon: it is a synne of a pert foly. And therefore a philosopher sayd whan men asked hym howe that he shulde please the people, he answerde: Do many good dedes & speke fewe vanytes. After thys commeth the synne of the peres, that ben the dyuels apes, for they make folke to laughe at her iapeyre, as folke do at the gawdes of an ape, which iapes defendeth saint Poule. Loke howe that vertuous wordes and holy exortes hem that trauayle in the seruyce of Christ. Right so confoundeth the vyle lasyuous wordes and smackes of iapers hem, that trauayle in the seruice of the deuyl. These ben the synnes of the tonge that come of yre and of other synnes.

¶ The remedy ayenst Ire.

The remedy ayenst Ire, is a vertue that men cal Mansuetude, that is Debonaire, and also another vertue that men clepe Pacience or Sufferaunce. Debonaire withdraweth and refreyneth the sterynges and mouynges of mannes corage in hete, in suche maner that they ne skyppe nat out by angre ne yre. Sufferaunce suffreth swetely all the anoyances & wronges that men done to man outwarde.

Saynt Jerome saith this of debonaire, that it doth no harme to no wight, ne saithe me for no harme that men do me say, he ne chaseth ayenst reason. This vertue sometyme commeth of nature: for as saith the philosopher. A man is a quicke thinge by nature, debonaire & treatable to goodnesse: but whan debonaire is enformed of grace, than it is the more worth.

Pacience is another remedy ayenst ire, and is a vertue that suffreth swetely euerye maness goodnesse, and is nat wroth for no harme that is done to him. The philosopher saithe, that pacyence is the vertue that suffreth debonairly all the outrages of aduersyte, & euery wycked worde. This vertue maketh a man lyke to god, and maketh hym goddes owne childeras sayth Christe. This vertue disconfyteth thin enemies. And therfore saith the wyse man: Yf thou wolde venquyshe thyn enemye lerne to suffre. And thou shalte vnderstonde that a man suffereth foure maner of greuaunces in outwarde thynges, ayenst the whiche four he must have four maner of pacyences.

The fyrste greuaunce is of wicked wordes which suffred Jesu Christ wythout grutchyng full pacyently, whan the Iewes dyspised hym full ofte. Suffre thou therfore pacyently, for the wyse man sayethe: Yf thou stryue with a foole, though the foole be wroth or though he

knyghe shewyn them hath bene no rest. That ouyle gruuaunce ouercome is to bene homage of the enemi: Thene ayenst suffered Christ full paciently, bothen he was blaspemed of all them he had excuse hym, and from wold not his doctryne. The thirde gruuaunce is a mannes bone bytter in his boop: That suffered Christe full paciently in al his passyon. The fourthe grefaunce is an outrageyous labouure in werkys: wherefore I saye, that suche that make hem sre occasyons to exaumple to gruoucusse ye cure of synne, as in holy dayes, forbely they do great synne. Here ayenst suffered Christe full paciently, and taught vs pacience, bothen he bare upon his blessed shulders ye crosse, upon whiche he should suffre dispytous deethe. Here may men lerne to be patient, for certes nat ouyle children be pacyence for loue of Jesu Christe, and for rewarde of the blessed ryches that is perdurable, but certes the olde paynems that neuer were Christened, commended and blisd the vertue of pacyence. A philosopher upon a tyme that wold haue bete his disciple for his great trespace, for whiche he was moued, and brought a robbe to beate the childe, and whan this childe sawe the robbe, he said to his maister: what thynke ye to do? I woll beate the saythe the maister for thy correction: For sothe sayd the childe, ye ought first correct your self that haue lost al your pacyence for the offence of a childe. For sothe sayde he maister al weepyng, thou sayest sothe: yaue thou the robbe my best thylde, and correcte me for myne impacience. Of pacience cometh obedience, through whiche a man is obedient to Christ & to al them to whiche he ought be obedient in Christ. And vnderstande wel ye obedience is perfyte when that a man berbe gladly & hastely with good hert entirely, all that he shulde do. Obedience generally is to performe the doctryne of god and of his souerayues, to whych him ought to be obeysaunt in al ryght wilfulle.

¶ The Seuenth.

After the synnes of enuye and slouthe woll I speke of the synne of Accidie: for euyl disbereth the hert of a man, and ye corrupteth a man, & accidie maketh hi heuy, thoughtful & pe ple. Enuy & his mayde bitternesse I hert, whiche bitternesse is moder of accidie, & ruineth fro hi ye hert of al goodnesse, thene is accidie the sin

gnythe of trouble of hert. And sayne Augustyne saythe: It is moder of goodnesse & mayde of bitternesse. Certes thys is a dampnable synne, for it hath no lyknesse to Jesu Christe, in no maner as it behoueth the frendes that men wyll be to Christ, as sayth Salomon: but Accidie hathe no suche bilygence. For he hathe all thynge lothy anoye and with trauaylle, sorowe, and displeasaunce. Holy thoughtes and deuocion: Holy thoughtes and deuocion.

For whiche the holy fathers. Il curios be ye that hathe the frendes of God in gryp greatly. Thus is accidie enemy to euery estate of man. For euery the estate of man is in foure maners. Ye perfyte is in the estate of Innocency, as was the estate of Adam before that he fyll to synne, for whiche estate he was holde to labour, as in prayeng & laudyng God. Another estate is the estate of spirituall men: in whyche estate men bene holden to labour in prayeng to god for amendement of her sinnes, and ryght wel graunte hem to ryse out of her synnes.

Another estate is the state of grace, in whyche the state be so holden to wepyng of penitence and teares to al these thinges is accidie contrary, for he loueth no bulynesse at all. Now ouyle ren, this foule synne accidie is also a ful great enemy to the ryches of ye body, for it ne hath no purueyance ayenst temporall necessitie, for he foloweth sustenaunce, and dilicacy al ye bes ebpoyl by archebisshop. The seuenth is, ye accidie is lyke hem that ben in the paynes of hell, bicause of her slouthe & heuynesse: for they that be dampned ben so bounde, that they may neither wel do ne thynke. Of accidie ouyle ren first that a man is anoyed & encombred to do any goodnes, & maketh that god hath abhominacion of suche accidie, as sayth sayne John. Also he roueth slouth that wol nat suffre no bardnesse ne penaunce: for sothly slouth is so tender & delycate, as sayth Salomon, that he wol suffer no hardnesse ne penaunce, & therfore he maketh all ye body. Ayenst this rotten synne of accidie & slouthe, shulde euery creature bene stif & vse bem to do good workes: and manlye & hertnously entche corage to do, thynkyng that our lorde Jesu Christ quyteth euery good debe, be it neuer so lyte. Ye lyfe of labour is a great thynge. For it maketh, as sayth saynt Bernarde, the labourer to haue stronge armes and harde synewes: & slouthe maketh hem feble, and tender. Thene ouyle ren begyn to worke any good workes. For euery he that entrythe to synne,

him

hym thynketh it is so great an empryse for to vndertake the workes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte, that the circumstaunces of goodnesse bene so grenous and weyghtye for to suffre, ꝑ he dare not vndertake to do workes of goodnesse, as saith saint Gregorye.

Now cometh wanhope, that is dispeyre of the mercy of god, that cometh somtyme of to moche outragious sorowe, and somtyme of to moche drede, ymaginynge ꝑ he hathe do so moche synne, that it will not auayle hym, tho he wolde repent him and forsake synne: thorough whiche dispeyre or drede, he abandoneth all his herte to euerye manere synne, as sayth sayntc Augustyne. Whiche dampnable synne, yf it contynewe vnto his ende, it is called synnyng in the holygost.

This horryble synne is so perylous, that he that is dispeyred thenketh no felony ne no synne that he douteth for to do, as shewed wel by Judas. Certes aboue all synnes than is this synne most displesant to Christe & moost contrarye. Sothlye he that dyspeyreth hym is lyke to the cowarde champyon recreaunte, that flyeth without nede. Alas alas, nedeles is he recreaunt, and nedelesse dispayred. Certes the mercy of god is euer redy to the penytent person, and is aboue al his werkes.

Alas canne not a man bethynke hym on the gospell of sayntc Luke. xv. Where Christe sayth, that as well shall there be ioye in heuen vpon a synfull man that dothe penytẽce, as vpon foure score & nyneteue ryghtfull men that nede no penytence. Loke ferther in the same gospel the ioye and the feest of the good man that had lost his sonne, whan his sonne with repentaunce was retourned to hys father. Canne they not remembre hem also, that (as sayth sayntc Luke) Capiter. xx. Howe that the theefe that was hanged beside Jesu Christ, said: Lorde remembre me, whan thou comest in to thy reigne.

Forsothe said Christe, I saye to the: To daye shalte thou be with me in paradyse. Certes, there is nõ so horryble synne in man, that ne may in his lyfe be distroyed by penytence, thorughe vertue of the passion and of the dethe of Christe. Alas what nede men than to be dispayred, sythe that his mercy is so redy and large. Aske and haue. Than commeth slompnesse, that is sluggy, slombringe, which maketh a man heuy and dull in bodye & in soule, and this synne cometh of slouthe: And certes the tyme that by waye of reason man shulde not slepe, is by the morowe, but yf there were cause resonable. For sothely the morowe tyde is most conuenable a man to say his prayers, and for to thanke god, & to honoure god, and to yeue almesse to the poore, that cometh first in the name of Jesu Christe. Lo, what sayth Salomon? who so wol by the morowe awake to seke me, he shall fynde me. Than cometh negligence or retchelesnesse, that recketh of nothynge. And though that ignoraunce be mother of al harmes, certes negligence is the norryce. Negligence ne dothe no force whan he shall do a thynge, whether he do it well or yuell. The remedye of these two synnes is, as sayth the wise man: That he that dredeth god spareth not to do that he oughte to do, & he that loueth god he wol do dyligẽce to plese God by hys werkes, and abandone hym selfe wyth all his myghte well for to do. Than cometh ydelnesse, that is the yate of all harmes. An ydel man is lyke to a place ꝑ hath no walles, ꝑ dyuell may entre on euery syde, or shote at him that is discouert, by temptacion on euery syde. This ydelnesse is the thorruke of all wycked and vylayne thoughtes, and of all ordure. Certes the heuen is yeue to hem that wyll labour, and not to ydell folke. Also Dauid sayth, that they ne be not in the labour of men, ne they shall not be whypped with men, that is to saye in purgatorye. Certes than semeth it they shall be turmented wt the dyuels in hell, but yf they do penaunce.

Than cometh the synne that men cal Tarditas, as whan a man is so latered, or tarynge or he wol tourne to god: and certes that is a great foly. He is lyke hym that falleth in the dyche, and woll not aryse. And thys byce cometh of false hope, that he thynketh he shall lyue longe, but that hope fayleth ful ofte.

Than cometh lachesse, that is he that whan he begynneth any good worke, anon he wol leaue and synne it, as done they that haue any person to gouerne, and ne take of hym no more hede, anon as they fynde any contrarye or any anoye. These ben the newe shepherdes, that let theyr shepe wittyngly go renne to the wolfe that is in the breres, or do not force of her owne gouernaunce. Of this cometh ponerte and distruction bothe of spirituell and temporell thynges. Than cometh a maner coldnesse that freseth the hert of man. Than cometh vndeuotion, throughe whiche a man

is so blynd, and as saith sayne Bernarde, hath suche langour in his soule, ꝑ he maye nether rede ne synge in holy churche, ne here ne thinke of no deuocyon, ne trauayle with his bondes in no good worke, that it ays to him bytterey and all apalled. Than weyeth he slowe and slombry and soone wol be wrothe, and soone is enclyned to hate and enuye. Than cometh the synne of worldly sorowe, suche as is called Tristicia, that sleeth a man, as sayethe saint Poule: For certes suche sorowe worketh the dethe of the soule and body also, for therof cometh that a man is anoyed of his owne lyfe. Ouerfore suche sorowe shorteth full ofte the lyfe of man, er that his tyme is come by way of kynde.

¶ Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

Ayenst this horrible synne of Accidie, and the braunches of the same, there is a vertue that is called Fortitudo or strengthe, that is an affection, throughe whyche a man dispyseth anoyous thynges: Thys vertue is so myghty and so rygorous, that it dare withstōd mightyly, and wyselye kepe hym selfe fro perylles that hene wycked, and wrastell ayenst thassautes of the dyuel, for it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth & maketh it feble: for this fortitude may endure by lōge sufferaunce the trauayles that ben conenable. This vertue hath many speces, the first is called Magnanimite, that is to say, gret corage. For certes there behoueth gret corage ayenst Accidie, lest that it ne swalowe ꝑ soule by the synne of sorowe, or distroye it by wanhope. Certes this vertue maketh folke vndertake harde and greuous thynges by her owne will wysely and resonably. And for as moch as the deuyl fyghteth ayenst a man more by subtylte & sleight than by strength, therfore shall a man wythstonde hym by witte, reason, and discrecion. Than are there ꝑ vertues of fayth and hope in gōd and in his saintes, to eschue and accomplysshe the good workes, in ꝑ whiche he purposeth kernely to continue. Than cometh suerty or sikernesse, and that is whan a man ne douteth no trauaile in time cōming, of the good workes that he hath begonne. Than cometh Magnificence, that is to saye, whan a man doth and performeth great workes of goodnesse that he hath begon, and that is thende why that men shulde do good workes. For in the accomplysshinge of good workes, lyeth the great guerdon. Than is there Constaunce, that is stablenesse of corage, and this shulde be in hert by stedfast faith, and in mouthe, in beryng, in chere, and in dede. Also there ben mo speciall remedies ayenst accidie in dyuers workes: as in consyderacion of the paynes of hell, the ioyes of heuen, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wyl yeue him myght to performe his good entent.

¶ De Auaricia

After Accidie wol I speke of Auarice, and of couetise. Of whiche synne S. Poule saith: the rote of all harmes is couetise, ad Timoth. vi. For sothly whan the herte of man is confounded in it selfe and troubled, and that the soule hath loste the comforte of God, than seketh he an ydell solace of worldly thynges. Auarice, after the dyscripcion of sayne Augustyn, is a lycorousnes in herte to haue erthly thynges. Some other folke say, that auarice is for to purchace many erthely thynges, & nothing to yeue to hem that haue nede.

And vnderstond that auarice standeth not onely in londe ne catel, but somtyme in science and glorye, & in euerye maner of outrageous thynges is auarice. And couetise is this. Couetise is for to couete such thinges ꝑ thou hast nat. And auarice is to wicked holde & kepe suche thynges as thou hast without ryght. Sothly this auarice is a synne that is full damnable, for all holy writ curseth it, & speketh ayenst ꝑ vice, for it dothe wrong to Jesu christ for it taketh fro him the lout that men to hym owe, and tourneth it backewarde ayenst all reason, and maketh that the auaricious man hath more hoope in hys catell, than in Jesu Christe, and dothe more obseruaunce in keping of his treasour, than he doth in the seruyce of Jesu Christ. And therfore saith sayne Poule: ad Ephesios quinto: That an auaricious man is the thraldome of idolatrye. What differences there betwixt an ydolaster and an auaricyous man? But that an ydolaster paraunture ne hathe nat but a mawmet or two, and ꝑ auaricious man hathe many one. For certes euerye florayn in his coffer, is his Mawmet. And certes the syn of mawmetry is the first that god defended, as in the first comaundemente it beareth witnesse, in Deu-

Exod. xx. Thou shalte haue no false goddes before me, ne thou shalte make to the no grauē thynge. Thus is an auaricyous man, that louerth hys treasour before god, an idolater. And thrroughe thys cursyd synne of auarice and Couetyse, cometh these harde lordshippes, thrrough which they ben streyned by tollages, customes, and carvages, more than ther dewtye or reason is, or elles take they of ther bondmen amerciamentes, whiche myght more resonably be called extorcions than merciamentes. Of whiche amerciamentes or raūsonynge of bondemen, some lordes stewardes saye that it is rightful, for as muche as a churle hath no temporell thynge, that it ne is his lordes, as they say. But certes these lordshippes do wrong, that detreue their bondmē thynges that they neuer yaue hem. Augustinus de Ciuitate dei. Libro. iv. Sothe is that the condicion of thraldom, and the first cause of thraldome was for synne.

Thus may ye se, that thoffence deserued thralhode, but nat nature. Wherfore these lordes ne shulde not much glorify hem in her lordshyps, sythe that they by naturall condicion ben not lordes ouer thralles but for that thralhem came firste by the deserte of synne. And more ouer there as the lawe sayethe, that temporell goodes of bonde folke ben the goodes of her lorde: yea, that is for to vnderstonde, the goodes of the emperour, to defend hem in her ryght, but not to robbe hem ne reue hem. Therfore sayth Seneca: thy prudence shulde lyue benignely with the thralles. Those that thou calleſt thy thralles, ben goddes people: and for humble people ben Christes frendes, they ben cōtubernial with the lordes. Thinke also that of suche sede as chorles springe, of suche sede spring lordes: as wel may þ chorle be saued as the lorde. The same deth that taketh the chorle, suche deth the taketh the lorde. Wherfore I rede do right so with þ chorle as thou woldeſt that thy lorde dyd with the if þ were in his plyght. Euery synfull man is a chorle to syn: I rede the lord certes, that thou werke in suche wise with thy chorles, þ they rather loue the than drede the. I wote well that ther is degre aboue degre, as reason is, and thyl is that men do her deuoure there as it is due. But certes extorcions and dispite of youre vnderlynges is dampnable. And fordemore vnderstonde well, that these conqueroures or tirauntes make full ofte thralles of hem that ben borne of as royall blode as ben they that hem conquere. Thys name of thraldom was neuer erſt know, tyl that Noe sayd that his sonne Canaan shulde be thrall to hys brethren for hys synne. What say we than of hem that pyll and do extorcions to holy churche: Certes the swerd that men yeue firſt to a knyght, when he is newe dubbed, signifyeth that he shulde defende holye churche, and not robbe and pyll it, and who so dothe is traytour to Christe. And as sayethe sayne Justyn, they been the deuils woulues that strangle þ shepe of Jesu Christ, and don worſe than woulues, for sothly when the wouſe hath full his wombe, he slynteth to strāgle shepe: But sothly the pyllours and distroyers of holy churche goodes ne do not so, for they ne slynt neuer to pyll. Nowe as I haue sayde, sythe so is that synne was firſt cauſe of thraldome, than is it thus, that at þ tyme that al this worlde was in synne, than was al this world in thraldom and in subiection, but certes syth the tyme of grace came, god ordayned þ some folke shuld be more hye in estate and in degree, and some folke more lowe, and that eche shulde be serued in his estate. And therfore in some countreys there they be thralles, whan they haue turned hem to the faythe, they make her thralles fre out of þ thraldom: and therfore certes the lorde oweth to his man that þ man oweth to the lorde. The pope calleth hym selfe seruaunt of the seruaūtes of god, but for as the estate of holy churche ne might not haue ben, ne the comen profyte might not haue be kept, ne peace ne rest in erth, but if god had ordayned that some man had hyer degre, and some men lower: Therfore was soueraynte ordayned to kepe mayntayne, and defende her vnderlynges and her subiectes in reason, as ferforthe as it lyeth in her power, and not to dystroy ne confounde hem. Wherfore I say, that those lordes that ben lyke woulues þ deuour the possessyons or the catell of poore folkes wrongfully, without mercye or mesure, they shal receyue by þ same mesure that they haue mesured to poore folke, the mesure of Jesu Christ but it be amended. Nowe cometh discreyte betwixt marchaunt & marchaunt. And thou shalt vnderstonde that marchaundise is in two maners, that one is bodyly, and that other is goostly: that one is honest and lefull, and that other is dishonest and vnlefull. The bodely marchaundise that is lefull & ho-

nesse is this: that there as god hath ordayned that a reigne or a countraye is sufficiaunte to hym selfe, than it is honeste and lefful that of habondaunce of thys countrey, meune helpe an other countrye that is nedy: And therfore there must be marchaauntes to bryngе fro one countrye to that other her marchaundyse.

That other marchaundise that men haunten with fraude, and trecherye, and dysceyte with lesinges and false othes, is ryght cursed and dampnable. Espirituell marchaundyse is properlye Symonye, that is entencyle desyre to bye any thyng espirituell, that is a thing whiche apertayneth to the saintuarye of god, and to cure of the soule. Thys desyre if so be that a man do his dilygẽce to performe it, al be it that his desyre ne take none effect, yet it is to him a deedly sinne, and if he be ordred, he is irreguler. Certes symonye is called of Symon magus, that wolde haue bought for temporel catel the yefte that god had yeue by the holy goost to sayne Peter and to the apostels: And therfore vnderstõde that he that selleth, & he that bieth thinges espyrituels, ben called Simonyackes, be it by catel be it by procuryng or by fleshly prayer of his frendes, fleshly frendes or espirituel frendes: fleshly in two maners, as by kynred or other frendes: Goothly if they praye for him that is not worthy and able, it is symonye if he take the benifyce, & if he be worthy and able there is none. That other maner is whan man or womã prayeth for folke to auaũce hem onely for wicked fleshly affeccion whiche they haue vnto the persons, and that is foule symonye. But certes in seruyce, for whiche men yeuen thinges espirituel vnto her seruaũtes, it must be vnderstonde that the seruyce muste be honest, or els not, & also that it be without bargeyning, and that the person be able. For as sayth the sayne Damasen: All the synnes of the worlde at regarde of thys synne, are as thing of nought, for it is the grettest sinne that may be after the synne of Lucifer & of Antichryste: For by this sinne god forlesth ỳ churche and the soule whiche he bought with his precious blod, by hem that yeue churches to hem that ben not worthy, for they put in theues hõdes that stale the soules of Jesu Christ, & distroi his patrymonye. By suche vnworthy prestes and curates haue leude men lesse reuerence of the sacramẽtes of holy churche, and such yeuers of churches put ỳ childzen of Christ out and put i the church the diuels owne sonne: they sel the soules that lambes shulde kepe to the wolf which strangleth hem: and therfore shall they neuer haue parte of the pasture of lambes, that is the blysse of heuen. Now cometh hasardrie with his apertenaunces, as tables and tasles, of which cometh discryue, false othes, chydinges, & all rauynesse blasphemynges, and renyenges of god, and pase of hys neighbours, waste of goodes, mispendynge of tyme, and somtyme manslaughter. Certes hasardours ne mowe not be without great synne. Of Auarice cometh also lesynges, theft, false witnesse, and false othes: and ye shall vnderstonde that these be great synnes, and expresse ayenste the cõmaundementes of god, as I haue sayde. False witnesse is in worde, & also in dede: In worde as for to bryeue thy neighbours good name by thy false witnesse, or bryeue hym his catel or his herytage, by thy false witnessyng, whan thou for yre or for mede, or for enuye, bearest false witnesse, or accusest hym, or excusest thy self falsely. Ware ye questmongers and notaries: Certes for false witnessynge was Susan in ful great sorowe & payne, and many an other mo. The syn of theft is also expresse ayenste godders hest, & in two maners, coporel & spirituel, ỳ is porel, theft is: As for to take thy neighbours catel ayenst hys wyll, be it by force by sleight, be it by mette or by mesure: by false lynge also of false endytementes vpon hym, and in borowyng of thy neighbours catell, & entent neuer to pay it ayen, & semblable thynges. Espirituell theft is sacrilege, that is to say, hurtyng of holy thynges sacred to Christ in two maners, by reson of the holy place, as churches or churche yerdes: for which euery vilaynous synne that men done in suche places may be called sacrilege, or euery violence in the semblable places Also they that withdrawe falsely the rightes that longe to holy churche and pleysyng. And generally sacrilege is to reue holy thing fro holy place, or vnholy thing, out of holy place, or holy thynge out of vnholy place.

¶ Relenacio contra peccatum Auaricie

Now

NOwe shall ye vnderstonde, that remenyage of auarice is misericorde and pyte largelye taken. And men myght also wel by that misericorde and pyte are trienyng of auarice: Certes the auaricious manne sherueth no pety ne misericorde to the nedefull man.

For he deserueth hym in the kepynge of his treasure, and nat in the restreinynge ne reiesynge of his euyn cristien. And therfore speke I first of misericorde. Than is misericorde (as sayth the philosopher) a vertue, by whiche the corage of man is steered, by the mistake of hym that is distressed. Upon whiche misericorde foloweth pyte, in performynge and fulfyllynge of charitable workes of mercy, herby and comforteth hym that is mistake. And certes these thinges moue and steere a man to misericorde of Jesu Christ, that he yaue hym selfe for our offence, & suffred deth by misericorde, and forgaue vs our originall synne, and therby releassed vs fro the payues of hell, and mynysshed the payues of purgatory by penitence, and yeueth grace wel to do, and at laste the blysse of heuen. The speces of misericorde ben for to lene, and also for to yeue: for to forgyue and release, & for to haue pyte in herte and compassion, of the mischefe of his euyn cristien, and also to chastise there as nede is. Another maner of remedye ayenst auarice, is resonable largesse: but sothly here showeth the consideracio of ỹ grace of Jesu Christ, and of the temporell goodes, and also of the goodes perdurable ỹ Jesu Christ yafe to vs, and to haue remembraunce of the deth which he shal receyue, he knoweth not whan, where, ne who: and also that he shal forgo all that he hath, saue onely that whiche he hathe spended in good werkes.

But for, as muche as some folke ben vnmesurable, meme ought for to auoyde and eschue foly lyke largesse, the whiche some people call waste.

Certes he that is foole large, yeueth not his catell, but he leseth hys catell.

Sothly what thyng that he yeueth for vayneglory, as to myssellers and to folke that beare his renome in the worlde, he hath syn therof and none almesse: Certes he leseth foule hys good ỹ he ne leseth with the pelt of his good nothyng but synne. He is lyke to an horse that leseth rather to drinke drory or troubled wa ter than for to drynke water of the cleer well. To hem appertaynen the sayd curssynge, that Christ shall yeue at the daye of dome, to hem that shal be dampned.

Sequitur de Gula.

AFter Auarice cometh Glotony, which is expresse ayenst the co maundement of god. Glotony is vnmesurable appetyte to eete or to drinke, or elles to do ynough to the vnmesurable appetyte and vnordeyned couetise to eate or to drinke. This synne corrupteth al this worlde, as is well shewed in the synne of Adam & of Eue. Loke also what saith Sayn̄t Poule of glotony. Many (saith he) gon, of which I haue ofte sayd to you, & now I say it weepyng, ỹ ben the enemyes of the crosse of Christ, of whiche the ende is deth, & of which her wombe is her god & her glory, in confusion of hem that so de nour erthly thynges. He that is vsed to this synne of glotonye, he ne maye no synne withstonde, he must be in seruage of all vices, for it is the Deuyls hostrye, there he hydeth and restreth him. This synne hathe manye speces: The fyrste is dronkenesse that is the horrible sepulture of mans reson: and therefore whan a man is dronke he hath loste hys reson: And this is deedly synne. But sothly whan that a man is not woote to stronge drinke, and parauenture ne knoweth not the strength of the drinke, or hath feblesse in his hed, or hath trauayled, through which he drinketh the more, al be he sodaynly caught with drinke, it is no deedly synne, but venyall. The seconde spece of glotonye is, that the spirite of a man worketh al troubled, for dronkennesse bireueth him the discretion of his wyt.

The thirde maner spece of glotonye is whan a man deuoureth his meate, & hath not ryght full maner of eatynge. The fourthe is whan through the great abundaūce of his meate, the humours in his body bene dysturbed. The fyfth is forgetfulnesse by to moche drinkyng, for whiche sometyme a man forgetteth er the morowe what he dyd on the ouenyng before.

An other maner ben dyuyded the speces of glotonye after sayn̄t Gregorye. The fyrste is for to eate before tyme to eate. The second is whan a man gyueth him to delycate meat or

drinke

dyuine. The thirde is when men take to mo-che more measure. The fourthe is curiosyte, with great entente to make and apparayll his mete. The fifthe is for to eate to gredely.

There ben the fiue fyngers of the dyuels hō de, by whiche he drawith folke to synne.

¶ The remedy ayenst Glotony.

Ayenst glotonye the remedy is abstynence, as sayethe Salyenerbut thus I holde nat me curious, if he do it for the helpe of his body. Sayncte Augustyne wolle that abstynence be done for vertue, and with patience. Abstynence (saithe he) is lytel worthe, but if a man haue good wyl therto, and but if he be enforced by patience and charyte, and that men do it for goddes sake, and in hope to haue hyre of heuen. ¶ The frieues of abstynence be attemperaunce, that holdeth the meane in all thynges. Also shame that eschueth all dishonestie. Suffisaunce that seketh no ryche meates ne drinkes, ne dothe not force of outrageous, appayrelynge of meate. Measure also, that restrayneth by reason, the vnmesurable appetyte of eatyng. Sobernesse also, that restrayneth the outrage of drinke. Sparynge also, that restrayneth the delicate eate to sitte longe at meate, wherefore some folke stonden of her owne will whenthey eete, bycause they wol eate at lesse leasure.

¶ De Luxuria.

After Glotonye cometh Lechery, for these two sinnes ben so nye cosins, that oft tyme they wol nat departe. God wote thys synne is full displesaunte to god, he forsaythe hem selfe to do no lechery. And therfore he putteth great payne ayenst thys synne.

For in the olde lawe, if a woman thall were take in this sinne, she shulde be brate with stones to dethe. And if she were a gentil woman she shulde be shaue with stones. And yf she were a bysshops doughter, she shulde be brent by goddes comaundement. ¶ More ouer by the fyri of lechery, god drowned all the worlde and after that he brent fyue cities with thunder and lyghtenynge, and sanke hem in to hell.

Nowe let vs speke than of the sayde synne of lechery, that men cal auowtrye of wedded folke, that is to saye, if that one of hem be wedded or els both.

Seynt Johan sayeth, that auowtrers shal in hell in a lake brennynge of fyre and brimstone for the stenche of her synne: Crist ches the hurtyng of this sacrament as enemy-sible thyng: It was made of god hym self in paradyse, and confirmed by Jesu Christe as wytnesseth sayne Mathewe in the gospell: A man shal leaue father and mother and take to hys wife, and they shal be two in one flesh.

Thys sacrament betokeneth the mariage togyther of Christe and holy churche. And not onely that god forbade auoutrye in dede, but also he commaundeth that thou shalt not coueyte thy neighbours wyfe. Ihesus saythe sayne Augustyn is forbodden al maner couetyse to do lechery. Lo, what sayeth sayne Mathewe in the gospell, that who so seeth a woman to couetyse of his lust, he hath done lechery with her in his herte. Here maye ye se that not onely the dede of this sinne is forbodden, but also the desire to that synne. This curssed synne anoyeth grieuously hem that it haunte: and sleth the soule, for he sodeynly it to synne and to payne of dethe, which is perdurable. Vnto the body anoyeth it greuously also, for it drieth hym and wasteth, and shedeth hym, [illegible] of his bloode he maketh sacrifyce to the [illegible]de of hell: It wasteth hys catell and his substaunce. And certes if it be a foule thynge a man to waste his catell or substaunce yet it is a fouler thynge whan that for suche ordure wommen dispende vpon hem her catell and her substaunce. Thys synne as sayeth the Prophete, taketh from man and woman her good fame and her honoure, and it is full delectable and pleasaunte to the dyuell. For therby wynneth he more parte of hys wycched worlde. And eyght as a marchaunte desyreth hym moste in that chaffare whiche he hath most auauntage and profyte of, eyght so delyteth the feende in thys ordure.

Thys is that other honde of the dyuell, with fyue fyngers, to catche the people to his vsage. The firste is the folysshe lokynge of the folysshe woman and of the folysshe man, that sleeth right as the Basilicok or cocatrice sleeth folke by benym of hys sygte: for the coueytyse of the eyen folowith the coueytyse of the herte. The fredde finger is the dilatous touchynge in wicked maner. And therfore sayth Salo-

man: that who so toucheth and handeleth a woman, he fareth as the man that handeleth the scorpion, whiche styngeth and sodaynely sleeth through his enuenymyng, or as who so that toucheth warme pytche blemisheth hys fingers. The thirde is foule wordes, whiche norysshe fyre, whiche right anon byrneth the herte. The fourth fynger is the kyssyng: and truely he were a great foole that wolde kysse the mouthe of a brennynge ouen or of a furye. And more fooles ben they that kysse in vylanye, for that mouthe is the mouth of hell, and namely these olde dotardes holours, whiche wol kysse and flytcher, and bely hem eek thoughe they maye nought do. Certes they ben lyke to houndes: for an houndé whá he cometh nyghe to the roser, or by other bestes, though so be ỳ they maye not pysse, yet wol he hrue vp his legge and make a countenaunce to pysse. And for that manye manne weneth that he maye not synne for no lycoustnesse that he doth with hys wyfe. Truely that opynyon is false: God wote a manne may slee hym selfe with his owne knyfe, and make hym selfe dronke with his owne tonne. Certes be it wyfe, be it childe or any worldly thing, that he louyth before god, it is his maumet, and he is anydolastre. A man shoulde loue his wife by discrecion, pacience and attemperatly, and than is she as though it were hys suster. The fyfthe fynger of the dyuelles honde is the stynkyng dede of lechery. Truely thy fyue fyngers of glotonye the dyuell putteth in to the woombe of a man: And with hys fyue fyngers of lecherye he grypeth hym by the reynes, for to throw him in to the fornels of hell, there as they shall haue the fyre and the wormes that euer shal laste, and wepyng and waylyng, and sharpe hongre and thrust, grymnesse of dyuels, whiche shall all to trede hem withouten ende. Of lecherye as I sayde foorthe and springeth diuers speces: as fornication, that is betweene man and woman whiche be not maryed, and is deedly synne, and ayenst nature: All that is enemye and distruccion to nature is ayenst nature. Perfaye the reason of a man telleth him well also that it is deedly sinne, for as much as god forbade lecherye. And faynte Poule yeueth hem the regne that nis bewe to no wight but to hem that done deedly synne. Another synne of lecherye is to byreue a maydes maydenhed, for he that dothe, certes he casteth a mayden out of the hyest degre that is in this presente lyfe, & byreueth her that precious fruite that the boke calleth the hundreth fruites, I ne can saye it none other wyse in Englysshe, but in latyn it hight (Centesimus fructus) Certes he that so doth is the cause of many damages and bilanyes, more than any manne can reken: right as he is cause of many domages somtyme that beestes do in the felde, that breake the hedge or ỳ closure through whiche he distroyeth that may not be restored: For certes no more maye maydenhed be restored than an arme that is smitte fro the body maye returne ayen and wexe: She maye haue mercy, this wote I well, if that she haue wyll to do penitence, but neuer shal it be that she nas corrupte. And al be it so that I haue spoke somwhat of auoutry, also it is good to shewe the perylles that longe to auoutrye, for to eschewe that foule synne. Auoutrye in latyn is for to saye, approchynge of an other mannes bedde, throughe whiche those that somtyme were one flesshe, abondon her bodies to other persons. Of this synne as sayethe the wyse man folowe many harmes: Fyrste breakyng of fayethe, and certes in fayethe is the keye of christendome: and whan that fayth is broke and loste, sothly christendom stont veyne and without fruite. This synne also thefte, for thefte generally is to reue a wight his thing ayenst his wyll. Certes thys is the foulest thefte that may be, whan that a woman stealeth her body fro her husbonde and yeueth it to her holour to defoyle her, and stealeth her soule fro Christe, and yeueth it to the dyuell: Thys is a fouler thefte than for to breake a churche and steale away the chalyer, for these auoutrers breke the temple of god spirituelly, and steale the vessell of grace that is the body and the soule: For whiche Christe shall distroye hem, as sayth sayntt Poule. Sothlye of this thefte douted greatly Joseph, whan that his lordes wife prayed hym of vylanye, whan he sayde: Lo my lady howe my lorde hath take to me vnder my warde, all that he hath in this worlde, ne nothyng of hys thynges is out of my power, but onely ye that be hys wyfe: and howe shoulde I than do thys wickednesse and syn so horrible ayenste god, and ayenst my lorde, god it forbede. Alas, all to lytel is suche trouthe nowe founde. The

thynge bycause is the lyght, through which they beholde the remembrement of god, and defoule the aultre of matrimonye, that is Christe. For crosse is so moche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so by gne, so moche is the greater syn for to breake it: For God made mariage in paradyse in the estate of innocencie, so multyplye mankynde in the seruyce of God, and therfore is the brekynge therof the more greuous, of whyche brekyng come false heyres ofte tyme, that wrongfully occupie folkes heritages, and therfore woll Christe put hem oute of the reygne of heuen, that is herytage to good folke. Of this brekyng comyth also ofte tyme that folke bu ware wedde or fynde wyth her owne kynrede: and nature eke these harlotes that haunte bordels of these foule women, that maye be lykened to a commune gonge, where as men pourge her ordure. What saye we also of putours, that lyue by the horybie lyfe of putrie, and constreyne women to yeue to hem a certayne rent of her bodily puterie, ye somtyme of his owne wife or his childe, as done these baudes: Certes these ben cursed synnes. Understonde also that auoutrye is ferre gladdre in the ten commaundementes bytwene theft & manslaughter, for it is the greatest theft that maye be, for it is theft of bodye and of soule, and it is lik to homicide for it kerueth a two & breketh a two hem that first were made of one flesche. And therfore by þ olde lawe of god they shuld be slayne, but nathelesse by the lawe of Jesu Christe, that is lawe of pyte, whan he sayd to the woman that was foude in auoutrye, and shulde haue be slayne wyth stones after the wyll of the Jewes, as was her lawe: So sayd Jesu Christe, and haue no more wyll to do synne. Soothly the vengeaunce of auoutrye is awarded to the paynes of hell, but yf so be that it be bysoughte by penytence. Yet ben there mo speces of this cursed synne, as whā that one of hem is religious or ells bothe, or of folke that bene entred into ordre, as subdeakon, deakon, or prieste, or hospitalliers. And euer the hyer that he is in ordre, the greater is the synne. The thinges that greatly agreggen her synne is the brekyng of her auowe of chastyte whan they receyued the ordre. And more ouer suche is that holy order is chefe of al the tresore of god and his especiall figure & vnyte of chastyte, to shewe that they bene ioyned to chastyte, which is the most precious tresore in heuen and therfor ordred folke ben specially called to god and of the spirytuall mayne of god, for whyche whan they bene bestly slayne they ben the traytours of god & of his people, for they lyue of the people. Prestes ben aungelles by the dignite of her mistorye, but for false layne semble sayth that Sathanas transformeth hym in an aungell of lyghte. Soothly the prestes that haunteth bestly synne be may be lykened the aungell of darkenesse, transformed in the aungell of lyghte, he semeth an aungel of lyghte, but forsoth he is angel of darknesse. Suche prestes be the sonnes of belyal, as wryteth in the booke of kynges, that they were the sonnes of Belial, that is the deuyll. Belial is to saye without iudge, and for they, hem thynketh they be free and haue no iudge, no more than bathe a free bulle that goeth wbiche cowe that hym lyketh in þ towne. So fare they by women, for lyghte as one fre bulle is ynoughe for all a towne, right so is a wicked prest corruption ynough for al a parysshe, or for al a countrey: Thefte prestes as sayth the boke, ne can not mynistre the mistorye of prestshode to the people, ne they haue not god, they ne bride hem not apayred, as sayth the boke, of rodden flesche that was to hem offred, but they rote by force the flesche that was rawe. Certes, so these shrewes ne bride hem not apayed of rosted & sodde flesche, with which the people fedde hem in great nurture, but they wolle haue rawe flesche of folkes wyues and her doughters, and certes these women that consent to her lechery haue great wronge to Christe and to holy churche, al halowes, and al soules, for they byreue al these hem that shulde worshyp Christ & his churche, and praye for christen soules, and therfore haue suche prestes and her lemmans also that consent to her lechery, the cachyng of all the shame christen, and they come to no mendement. The thirde spece of auoutrye is somtyme betwixt a man and his wyfe, and that is whan they take no regarde in her assemblynge, but only to her fleshly delyte, as sayth sayne Jerome, and be reden of nothyng but that they ben assembled bycause they be maryed, al is good ynoughe, as they thynke: but in suche folke hath the deuell power, as sayd the angel Raphael to Tobye, for in his assemblyng they put Jesu Christe out of her herte, and yeue hem selfe to all ordure. The

fourthe

bonde spece is the assemble of hem that ben of one affynyte, or kin of hem, with which her synne as her kynred hane dealed in the sinne of lecherye: Thys synne maketh hem lyke to wommen, that take no kepe to kynrede. And ouer perfitte is in two maners, eyther goostly: goostly as for to deale with hys goostly, for eyghte so as he that engendreth a childe in his fleshly father, right so is his godfader his father espirituell: for whyche a man may lye in no lesse synne assemble with her goostly, than with her owne fleshely brother. The fyfth spece is that abhominable synne, of whiche abhominable synne no man vnneth ought spekē ne wryte, nathelesse it is openly shewed in holy wryt. This cursed sinne done men & women in diuers entent and in diuers manere: but though that holy wryte speke of horrible sinne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the sonne that shyneth on the doughyll. In other synne apertayneth vnlechery that cometh slepyng, and this sinne cometh often to hem that bene maydens, and also to hem that be corrupt, and thys synne men call pollucion, that commeth of thre maners: Somtyme of languissyng of bodye, for the humours ben to ranke and habundaūt in the body of man, somtyme of infyrmyte, for feblesse of the vertue retentyfe, as phisyke maketh mencyon: Somtyme for surfet of meate and drinke, & somtyme of vilayuous thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes myndе whan he gothe to slepe, whiche may not be wythsayd, for which men must kepe hem wysely, or elles may men synne ful greuously.

¶ Remedium contra peccatum luxurie.

NOwe cometh the remedye ayenst lecherye, and that is generally chastyte and continence that restraine al dissolute mouinges þ come of fleshely talentes. And euer the greater mervyte shal he haue þ moste restreineth the wycked thankynges of the ordour of this synne, and this is in two maners: That is to saye, chastyte in maryage, and chastyte in wydowhede. Now shalt thou vnderstonde that matrymony is lefull assemblynge of man and woman that receyuen by vertue of this sacrament, the bonde through which they may not be departed in al her lyfe, that is to say, whyle that they lyue both. Thys, as saith þ bokе, is a ful great sacrament, god made it as I haue sayd in paradyse, & wolde hym self be borne in maryage: & for to halowe mariage he was at a weddyng, where as he turned water into wyne, whyche was the fyrst myracle that he wrought in erthe before his disciples. Trewe effecte of maryage clenseth fornycacyon and replenissheth holy church of good lynage, for that is the ende of mariage, & chaūgeth dredly synne in to venial synne, bytwene hem that ben wedded, and maketh the hertes as one of hem that ben wedded, as wel as the bodyes.

Very mariage was stablyshed by god, er that synne began, whan naturall lawe was in his ryght poynte in paradyse. And it was ordayned that o man shoulde haue but o woman, and o woman but o man, as sayth saynt Augustyn, by many reasons.

Fyrst for mariage is figured betwix Christ and holy churche.

Another is for a man is heed of a woman, alwaye by ordynaunce it shulde be so. For yf a woman hadde mo men than one, than shulde she haue mo heedes than one; and that were a ryght horryble synne before god, and also a woman myght not please so many folke atones: and also there shulde neuer be rest ne quiete amonge hem, for eche of hem wolde aske her owne ryghte. And furthermore, no man shulde knowe his owne engendrure, ne who shuld haue his heyrage, and the woman shulde be the lesse beloued.

Now cometh how that a man shuld bere him wyth his wyfe, and namely in two thynges: that is to saye, in sufferaunce and reuerence, as shewed Christe whan he fyrst made woman. For he ne made her of the heed of Adam, for she shulde nat claym to great lordshyppe, for there as the woman hath the maistrye, she maketh to moche baryaunce, there nede no mo ensampies of this, the experience all day, ought ynoughe sufficе.

Also certes, god ne made not woman of the foote of Adame, for she shoulde nat be holde to lowe, for she cannot pacyentlye suffre: but God made woman of the rybbe of Adam, for woman shuld be felow vnto man.

Man shuld beare him to his wife in faith, in trouth, and in loue (as saith sayntе Poule) that a man shulde loue his wife, as Christ loueth holy churche, that loued it so wel that he

dyen for ihesu christe a man for his wyfe, yf it were nede. ¶ Nowe howe that a woman shulde be subiecte to her husbonde: that telleth seynt peter, fyrste in obedience. And also as sayth the decre: A woman that is a wyfe, as long as she is a wife, she hathe none auctorite to sweare ne beare wytnesse, wythout leeue of her husbonde þ is her lorde, alwaye he shuld be so by reason. She shulde also serue hym in al honeste, and be attemperate of her array.

I wol wel that they shuld set her entente to please her husbondes, but nat by quantite of her array. Saint Jerom saith: wiues that be appareiled in like a precious purple, ne mow not clothe hem in Jesu christe. Saint Grego. saithe also: þ no wyght seketh precious aray, but onelye for vaingloyre to be honoured the more of the people. It is a great foly a woman to haue great aray outwarde, & in her selfe be foule inwarde. A wyfe shulde also be mesurable in lokyng, in bearynge, & in laughynge, & discrete in all her wordes & her dedes, and aboue all worldly thynges her shuld loue her husbonde with all her hert, and to him be true of her bodye: So shulde an husbond be to his wyfe: for sythe that all the body is the husbondes, so shuld her hert be, or els there is betwyxte hem two, as in that no perfyte maryage. Than shall men vnderstonde that for thre thynges a man & hys wyfe flesshly maye assemble. The first is for thentent of engendrure of thyldren to the seruyce of god, for certes þ is the cause fynal of matrymonye. Another cause is to yelde eche of hem to other þ dette of her bodyes, for neythet of hem hath power ouer her owne bodyes. The thirde is for to eschewe lechery & vilanye. The fourthe is for soth verily synne. As to the first is meryture: the seconde also, for as sayth the decre, þ the hath merite of chastite that yelderh to her husbond the det of her body, ye though it be ayenst her lykyng & the luste of her hert. The thirde maner is venyall synne, and truely scarcely maye ony of these be without venyall synne for the corrupcion & for the delyte. The fourthe maner is for to vnderstond, if they assemble only for amorous loue, & for none of the foresayde causes, but for to accomplysshe the debtuyng delyte, they reck not how oft, forthy it is dedly synne: and that with sorow some folke wol gadre hem more to do thā to her appetyte sufficeth. ¶ The seconde maner of chastyte is for to be a clene wydowe & eschewe the endyngynges of a man, and desyre the embrasyng of Jesu Christe: These ben those that haue had wyues, and haue forgote her husbandes, and also women that haue done lecherye, & ben reuued by penitence. And certes if that a wife couthe kepe her al chaste by licence of her husbōde, so that she yeue neuer none occasyon that he offende, it were to her a great merite. The maner of woman that obserueth chastyte in clothynge and in countenaunce, abstynence in eatynge and drinkynge, in spekyng & in dede, she is the beste of the doue of the blessed Virgyne that fulfylleth holy churche of good doure. The thyrde maner of chastyte is virginyte, and it behoueth that she be holye in herte, and clene of bodye, than is she spouse of Jesu Christe, and she is the lyte of Angels: she is the praysyng of this worlde, and she is as these martyrs in regalty: She hath in her that longe may not yeue ne leue thynke. Virginite bare our lorde Jesu Christe, and virginite was him self.

¶ Another remedye ayenst lecherye is specially to withdraw suche thinges as yeue occasion to that vylanye: as ease, eatynge, and drinkynge: for certes whan the potte boyleth strongly, the best remedy is to withdraw the fyre. Slepynge longe in great quiete is also a greet nourycer to lechery.

¶ Another remedy ayenst lechery is that a man or a woman eschewe the compaynye of hem by whiche he douteth to be tempted: for all be it so that the dede is wythstonde, yet is there greate temptacyon. Sothely a wyfe wasse, all thoughe it ne brenne not fulfye by slyckynge of the candell, yet is the wal blacke of the flame. Full ofte tyme I rede that no man truste in hys owne perfection, but be he stronger than Sampson, or holyer than Danyell, or wyser than Salomon.

Nowe after that I haue declared you as I canne, the seuyn dedlye synnes, and some of her braunches, with her remedyes. Sothly if I coude, I wolde tel you the tenne comaundementes, but so hye doctryne I putte to diuines. Natheless I hope to god they ben touched in this treatyse eche of hem

¶ Sequitur secunda pars penitentie.

Nowe

Owe for asmoche as the secõde part of penytence stant in cõfessiõ of mouth as I beganne in the first cha. I say sayne Austyn sayth: Synne is euerye woorde & euery dede, and all they men commyte a-yenst the lawe of Jesu Cryste, and thys is to synne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by the fyue wyttes, whyche bene syght, herynge, smellynge, sauoure, and felynge. Fayre is it good to vnderstonde, that that aggreth most euery synne. Thou shalte consyder what thou art that doest the synne, whether thou be male or female, ponge or olde, gentyll or thrall, free or seruaunt, hole or sicke, wedded or single, ordred or vnordred, wife or mayde, clerke or seculer, yf she be of thy kynrede holy or goostly, or no, yf any of thy kynrede haue synned wyth her or no, & many mo thynges. Another circumstaunce is this, whether it be done in fornycacion or in auoutrye or no, in manere of homicide or no, horryble greate synne or small, and howe longe thou hast cõtynued in synne. The thirde circumstaunce is the place where thou haste done synne, whether in other menues houses or in thyne owne, in felde, in churche or in churchyarde, in churche holycrate or no. For yf the churche be halowed and manne or woman spyll his kynde within that place by waye of synne or wycked temptacion, the church is enterdyted, and the preest that dyd suche a vyllanye, the terme of al his lyfe, he shulde no more synge masse, and if he dyd, he shulde do deedly syn at euery tyme that he so songe masse. The fourth circumstaunce is, by whyche medyatours or by whyche messangers, or for enticement, or for consentement to beare company wyth felowshyp. For many a wretche for to beare company, woll go to the dyuell of hell. Wherfore they that egge or consent to the synne, ben partners of the synne, and of the temptacion of the synner. The fyfthe circumstaunce is how manye tymes that he hathe synned, yf it be in his mynde, & howe ofte he hath fallen. For he that ofte falleth in syn, he dispyseth the mercy of god and encreseth hys syn, and is vnkynde to Cryste, and he wexeth the more feble to withstonde synne, and synneth the more lyght by and the latter ryseth, and is more slow to aryse him, and namely to him that is his cõfessour. For whyche that folke whan they fall ayen to her olde folies, eyther they leaue their olde confessour, or els they departe her shrifte in dyuers partes. But sothly suche departed shrift deserueth no mercy of god for her synnes. The fyfte circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth as by temptacyon: and of hym selfe procure that temptacyon, or by the receyuyng of other folke, or yf he synne with a woman by force or by her assent, or yf ỹ woman maugre her herd haue be a forced or none.

This shal the tel, whether it were for couetyse or pouerte, or if it wer by her procurement or no, and suche other thynges. The seuenth circumstaunce is, in what maner he hath do hys synne, or how that he hath suffred that folke haue do to her. And the same shall the man tel playnely with all the circumstaunces, & whether he hath synned with cõmen bordel woman or none, or done hys synne in holye tymes or none, in fastynge tyme or none, or before hys shrift or after his later shrifte, and hath paraventure broke therby his penaunce enioyned, by whose helpe or wholecounsaile, by sorcery or crafte, al must be tolde, & all these thynges after as they be gret or smale, and grudge the cõscience of man or woman. And eke ỹ preeste that is thy iudge, may the better be auysed of his iudgement in yeuinge of penaunce, & that is after thy contricyon. For vnderstonde well that after tyme that a man hath defoyled his baptyme by synne, yf he wol come to saluacio there is non other way but by penaũce, shrifte, and satisfaction, and namelye by the two, yf there be a confessour to whom he maye shryue him, and the thyrd if he haue lyste to performe it. Than shall a man loke and consyder, that if he wol make a trewe and a profytable confessyon, there muste be foure condycions.

First it must be in sorowfulnesse of herte, as sayth the kyng Ezechiel to god, I woll remẽbre me all the yeres of my lyfe in bytternesse of my herte. This condicion of bytternesse hath fyue sygnes. The fyrst is, that cõfessyon muste be shamefaste, not for to couer ne hyde her synne, for he hath offended his lorde God and defoyled hys soule. And herof saith saint Augustyn: The herr traueyleth for shame of his synne, & for he hathe great shamefastnesse he is worthy to haue great mercy of god, whiche was the confession of the Publycan, that woolde nat heaue vp his eyen to heauen for he had offended god of heuen: for whyche shamfastnesse he had anon the mercye of God. And therof saith saynt Augusten: that such sham-

full, for he wyll forgeue you mercyfully and mercy.

Another signe of humilyte in confession of whyche sayth thyne goostly fader you ought to bere the myght of god, the hond of god is double in confession, for thereby god forgeueth the thy synnes, for he alone hath the power. And thys humilyte shal be in three, or in foure maner signes: For right as he hath humylyed hym to god in his herte, eyghe so shulde he humble his body outwarde to the preest, that sitteth in goddes stede. For which in no maner, sythe that Christ is soueraygne, and the preest meane and mediatour betwyxt Christ and the synner, and the synner is lesse by waye of traueyle. Than shulde not the synner syrte as hye as his confessour but knele before him or at his feet, but if feebleneesse cause it: For he shal not take hede who syteth there, but in whose place he sytteth. A man that hath trespassed to a Lorde, and cometh to aske mercye and make his accorde, if sytteth hym downe by him, men wolde holde him outrageous and noe worthye to soone for to haue remission of hys trespace.

The thirde signe is, howe thy hartre shulde be full of teares if thou maye, and yf thou maye not wepe with thy bodyly eyen, than wepe in thyne herte, whiche was the confession of S. Peter. For after that he hadde forsake Jesu Christ, he went out and wepte ful bitterly.

The fourth signe is, that thou ne lette not for shame to shewe thy confession: Such was the confession of Magdaleyn, that ne spared for no shame of hem that were at the feest, to go to our lorde Jesu christ and beknowe to him her synnes. The fyfthe signe is, that a man or a woman be obeysaunte to receyue the penaunce that hem is enioyned. For certes Jesu Christ, for the offences of man was obedient to death. The seconde condicion of very confession is, that it be hastely done. For certes, yf a man had a bredy wounde, euer the lenger that he tarryeth to heale him self, the more horde it corrupt and hatse him to his dethe, & also the woorde wold be the worse for to hele. And right so fareth synne, that longe synne is in a man in the herte. Certes a man ought hastely shewe his synnes for many causes, as for hardy of dethe, that cometh ofte sodaynly, and no certaynte what synne it shall be, ne in what place, and also the drenching of o synne after another: and also the lenger that he tarryeth the farther he is fro Christ. And if he abyde to his laste daye, scarcelye maye he shryue hym of remembre hym of hys synnes, by cause of hys grieuous maladye of hys herte. And for warrante and for he hath in his life hyd hym fro Jesu Christe wyste he hath spoken, he shall crye to Jesu Christ in the laste daye, and scarcely wyll he heare him. And vnderstande that this confession must haue fore thynges.

The shame must be playn and not couered ne hyd, for wicked hathe doone no profyte, yf a man shryue hym of his synnes: but it of pryde, or enuy, and so forthe with the spyces and circumstances of synne. And that he haue no pretended in his mynde the nombre & greatnesse of his synnes, and how longe he hath lyen in synne. And also that he hathe hertenesse for his synnes, and in stedfaste purpose (by ȳ grace of god) neuer ayen to fal in synne. And also that he hyde and counterfaute nothynge that he shye the occasion of synne, to whiche he is enclyned. Also thou shalte shriue the of all thy synnes he owest, and nat parte as a man and parte to another. Thou is to vnderstande, inentent to departe thy confession for shame or drede, for it is but strangling of thy soule. For certes Jesu Christe is enemy to all good, in hym is none impeerfection, and therfore either he forgeueth al perfitely, or els neuer a deale. I saye nat that if thou be assigned to thy penytencer for certayne sinne that thou art bound to shewe him all ȳ remenaunt of thy synnes, of whyche thou hast be shryuen of thy curate, but yf is lyke to the humilyte, this is no parte of thy shryfte. For I saye not there as I spoke of dyuision of confession, that if thou haue lyeuer to shryue the to a discrete and auncyent preest than to thy curate, ne by reason of thy curate, that thou ne mayest well shryue the to hym of all thy synnes. Let no synne be vnsolde as feere as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou shalte be shryuen to thy curate, tel him all thy synnes ȳ thou hast do sythe thou were last shryuen. This is no wicked entent of diuision of shryfte.

Also the very shryfte asketh certayne condicions. First that thou shryue the by thy free wyll, nat constrayned for shame of folde, for feblenesse, ne suche other thynges. For it is reason, that he that trespaceth by his free will, by his free wyll he confesse hys trespace, and that none other man tell his syn but himselfe, ne he shal nat nay ne deny his synne, ne wyth him ayenst the preest for amonestynge hym to leaue his synne. The seconde condycion is

ouer thy thrift be lawful, that is to saye, that thou fearest the. And also the pryestes shall thy confession be secrete, is he bounde to neuer the more, and that a man ne be not despeired of the mercy of Jesu Christ, as Cayn or Judas: And also a man must accuse hym selfe of hys owne trespace & not another, but he shall blame and wyte hym selfe & hys own malyce of his synne, & none other: But nathelesse if that a nother man be occasion or enchyson of his synne, or the estate of a parson be such by which his synne is agredged, or els he may not plainely shryue him but he tel the parson with which he hath synned, than may he tel, so that his entente ne be not to backbite the parson, but only to declare his confession. Thou ne shalte not also make no lesynges in thy confession for shamfastnesse, paraventure to say that thou hast not synned and done suche synnes as of whiche that thou ne were neuer gylty. For sayne Augustyn sayth: if that thou because of thyn humilite makest lesynges on thy self, though thou were not in synne before, yet arte thou than in synne through the lesynge. Thou muste also shewe thy synne by thyne owne proper mouth, but thou be dombe and vnhyde no letter: For that thou hast done the synne, shalt have the shame therfore. Thou shalte not the payne thy confession with fayre subtell wordes, to couer the more thy synne: for than begyleste thou thy self and not the preeste, thou must tell it playne, be it neuer so foule ne horrible. Thou shalte also shryue the to a preest, that is discrete to counsaile the, and also thou shalt not shryue the for vayneglory, ne for hypocrisye, ne for no cause but onely for the loue & grace of Jesu Christe, and heale of thy soule. Thou shalt not also rest to the preest sodaynly to tell hym lightly thy synne, as who sayth to tell a fape or a tale, but auysedly and with good deuocion: And generally shryue the ofte if thou ofte fall ofte aryse by confession. And though thou shryue the after than ones of the synne whiche thou hast be shryuen of, it is the more merite. And as sayth sayne Augustyne, thou shalt haue the more lightly forgeuenesse and grace of god, both of synne and payne. And ones a yere at leest, it is lawful to be houseled, for surely ones a yere all thinges renouelen. ¶ Nowe haue I tolde you of very confession, that is the .iii. part of penitence.

¶ Explicit secunda pars penitentie:
Et sequitur tertia pars.

The thyrde parte of penytence is satisfaction, and that stonte moost generally in almesse dede and bodyly payne. Nowe ben there thre maner of almesse.

Contrition of herte, where a man offereth hym selfe to god.

Another is, to haue pyte of defaute of hys neighboure. And the thirde is to grynge of good counsayle, goostly and bodely where as men haue nede, and namely in suffysaunce of mans fode. And take kepe that a man hath nede of these thinges generally, he hath nede of fode of clothing, & of herbergage; he hath nede of charitable counsayle, visiting in prison: in sickenesse, and sepulture of hys body. And yf thou mayste not visite the nedeful in thy persone, visite hym with thy message & yeftes.

These ben generally the almesse & workes of charite, of them that haue temporel richesse or discrecion in counsayling. Of these workes shalt thou here at the day of dome.

These almesse shalte thou do of thyn owne proper thinges, and hastely & priuely if thou mayste: But nathelesse, if thou mayste not do it priuely, thou shalte not forbeare to doe almesse though men se it, so that it be not do for thanke of the worlde, but onely for thanke of Jesu christ. For as witnesseth saint Mathew Cap. v. A cite may not be hydde that is sette on a mountayne, ne men lyghte not a laterne to put it vnder a bussherll, but sette it vpon a candilsticke to yeue light to men in the house. Right so shul your lyght, light before men, that they may se your good workes, and glorifye our father that is in heuen.

Nowe as to the of bodily payne, it stonte in prayers, waking, fastynge, bertuous teachynge of orisons. And ye shall vnderstonde, that orisons, or prayers, is to saye, a pytous wyl of hert, that setteth it in god, and expresseth by worde outward to reuele hatines, & haue thinges spirituel and pardurable, & sometyme temporell thinges. Of whiche orisons certes in the orison of the Pater noster: hath Jesu Christ enclosed moost thinges. Certes it is priuileged of thre thinges in his dignite for which it is more digne than any other prayer, for that Jesu Christe him selfe made it, & it is short, for it shulde be lerned the more lighe

ly, & to hym is the more easy to here, & helpe hym fulfyl the other with that offeren And for a man shulde be the lesse wery to saye it, & not greuse hym to here it, it is to hym ease and easye and for it comprehendeth in it selfe al good prayers. The exposicion of this holy prayer that is so effectuel and digne, I referre it to the maisters of theology, sauf thus much will I say that whan thou prayest, that god shulde forgeue the thy offences, as thou forgeuest hem that haue offended the: Be well ware that thou be nat out of charyte. This holye oryson amaynsheth also venyall synne, and therfore it appertayneth specially to penitence.

This prayer must be trewly said and in parfyte faith, and that men praye to god ordinately, discretely, and deuoutly, and alwaye a man shal put his wyll to be subiect to ȳ wyll of god. This oryson muste also be sayde with great humblesse and full pure and bonesty, and not to the anoyaunce of any man or woman. It muste also be continued with the workes of charite. It auayleth also ayenst the vices of the soule: For as saithe saint Jerome: By fastynge ben saued the vices of the flesche, and by prayer the vices of the soule.

After this thou shalt vnderstonde, that bodely prayer stont in waking. For Jesu Christ saith: Wake ye and praye, that ye ne entre in to wicked temptacion. Ye shall vnderstonde also, that fastynge stonte in thre thynges: In forberynge of bodely meate and drinke, in forberynge of worldly solyte, and in forberynge of deedly syn: this is to saye, that a man shall kepe hym fro deedly sinne with al his might.

And thou shalte vnderstonde also that god ordayned fastynge, and to fastynge parteyneth fourthinges. Largenesse to poore folke, Gladnesse of herte spirituel: nat to be angry ne anoyed, ne grutche for he fasteth, and also resonable houre to eate by measure, that is to saye, a man shal nat eate in vnreyne, ne syte the lenger at the table for he fasteth.

Than shalt thou vnderstonde, that bodely payne stont in disciplyne or teachyng by worde or writinge, or by ensample. Also in wearynge of heer or stamyn, or of habergeons on her naked flesche for Cristes sake, and that suche maner penaunces, ne make nat thyne herte bytter or angrye, ne anoyed of thy selfe for better is to caste away thyne heer, than it to suffre stroupe the sweetnesse of Jesu Christ. And therfore sayethe sayut poule: Clothe you, as they that ben chosen of god in herte of mekenesse, debonairte, sufferaunce, and suche maner of thynges, be watch Jesu Christ is more pleased, than with perles or habergeons.

Than is disciplyne also in knowynge of thy self, in frayenge with robbers, in hunger, in tribulacion, in suffringe patiently wronges that ben done to the, & also in patient sufferynge of sickenesse, or lesyng of worldly goodes or catell, as werre, stryfe, or other trowbles.

Than shalt thou vnderstonde which thynges disseuere penaunce, and that is in foure maners, drede, shame, hope, & wanhope, that is disperacion. And for to speke first of drede for whiche he shewed that he made suffer his penaunce. There ayenste is remedye for to thynke that bodely penaunce is but short and lyght, at regarde of the payne of helle that is so cruel & so longe, that it lasteth without ende.

Nowe ayenst the shame that a man hath to shriue hym, and namely suche ypocrites that wolde be holde to parfyte, that they have no nede to shriue hem. Ayenst that shame thenke a man thynke that by wayes of reason that he that herbe nat be ashamed to be soule thynges, trewes hym ought nat be ashamed for to saye thinges, and that is confessions.

A man shulde also thinke that god seeth and knoweth all his thoughtes and all his werkes: To whom nature nothynge be hyde ne couered. Men shulde also remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of doome to hem that be nat penitent & shriuen in this present life: For all the creatures in erth and in hell shal se openly, all ȳ they hydde in this worlde. Nowe for to speke of the hope of hem that ben so negligent & slowe to shryue hem: that standeth in two maners. That one is, that he hopeth for to lyue longe, and for to purchase muche rychesse for his heyres, and than he wol shriue hym: And as he sayth, him semeth than timely enough to come to shrift. Another is of surquidrie that he hath in chastes mercye. Ayenst the firste byer he shal thynke that oure lyfe is in no sykernesse, and also that all the rychesses in this worlde ben in aduenture, and passe as a shadowe on the wall. And as sayth sayut Gregorie, that it appartayneth to the great rightwisenesse of god, that neuer shall the payne synne of hem that neuer wolde withdrawe hem fro synne her thankes, but euer continued in synne: for that perpetuall wyll to do syn, shall they haue

perpetual

perpetuall payne. Wanhope is in two maner. The first wānhope is in ꝑ mercy of god. That other is that they thynke that they ne might not longe persteuer in goodnesse. The first wanhope cometh of that he demeth that he hath synned so greatly and so ofte, and so longe lyen in synne that he shall not be saued. Ayens that cursed wanhope shuld he thinke that the passion of Jesu Christ is more stronge for to vnbynde than synne is stronge for to bynde. Ayenst the seconde wanhope he shal thinke that as often as he falleth he may ryse agayne by penitence: and thoughe he neuer so longe hath lyen in synne, the mercye of Christ is alway redy to receiue him to mercy. Ayenst ꝑ wanhope that he demeth he shulde not long persteuer in goodnesse, he shal thinke that the feblenesse of the dyuel may nothinge do but if men wol suffre him, and also he shall haue strength of the helpe of Jesu Christ and of all holy churche, and the protection of angels if him lyste.

Than shall men vnderstonde what is the fruyt of penaunce, and after the wordes of Jesu Christe, it is endelesse blisse of heuen. Ther ioye hath neuer ende, no contrarie of ioye ne grenaunce: ther al harmes been passed of this present lyfe, there as is the syckernesse fro the payne of hell, there as is the blisful compayny that reioyce hem euer mo, euerich of other is ioye: there as the body of man that sometyme was foule and derke, is more clere than the sunne: ther as ꝑ body that sometyme was sicke, freyle, and feble, and mortal, is immortall, and so stronge & hole, that there ne maye nothynge appeyre it: there as is neither hunger, thurst, ne colde, but euery soule replenyshed with ꝑ sight of the parfyte knowyng of god. Thys blisfull reigne may men purchace by pouerte espirituel, and the glory by lowenesse, the plente of ioye by hungre and thurst, and the rest by trauayle, and the life by dethe and mortification of synne: to whiche lyfe he vs bringe, that bought vs with his precious blode. A M E N.

Here endeth the persons tale.

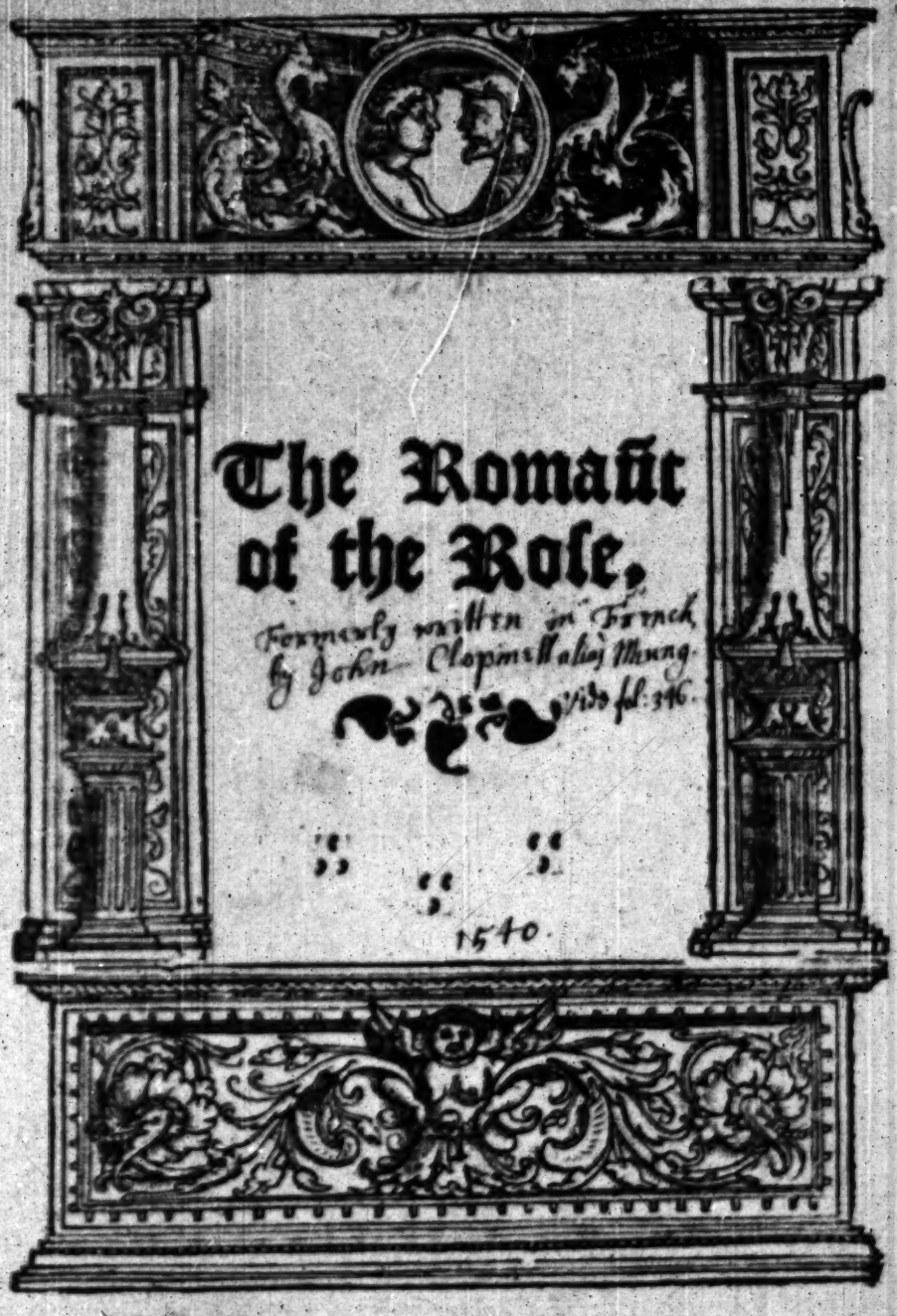
Thus endeth the boke of Cauntebury tales. And herafter folowerth the Romaunt of the Rose.

)o(

Multa loqui scitus sed sine pondere nihil
Et qui plus nocet quam rationis habet

R T

3 DE 64



The Romaũt of the Role,

Formerly written in French by John Clopinell alioj Meung.

Vide fol. 346.

1540.

Many men sayn that in
Sweuenings
Ther nys but fables
and lesynges
But men may some
sweuen sene
Which hardely that
false ne bene
But after warde ben apparaunt
This maye I drawe to warraunt
An authour, that hight Macrobes
That halte not dremes false ne lees
But vndoth vs the auisioun
That whilom mette kyng Cipioun
And who so saith, or weneth it be
Nape, or els nycete
To wene that dremes after fal
Let who so lyste a fole me cal
For this trowe I, and say for me
That dremes signifyaunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes
That dremen in her slepe a nyghtes
Full many thynges couertly
That fallen after all openly
Within my twenty yere of age
Whan that loue taketh his corage
Of yonge folke, I went soone
To bed, as I was wont to done
And fall I slepte, and in slepyng
Me mette suche a sweuenyng
That lyked me wonders wele
But in that sweuen is neuer a dele
That it nys afterwarde befal
Right as this dreme wol tel vs al.
Nowe this dreme wol I ryme a ryght
To make your hertes gay and lyght
For loue it prayeth, and also
Commaundeth me that it be so
And if there any aske me
Whether that it be, he or she
Nowe this booke, which is here
Shal hate, that I rede you here
Tis the Romaunte of the Rose
In whiche all the arte of loue I close.
The mater fayre is ay to make
God graunt me in gree that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is
And that is she, that hath ywis
So mokell prise, and therto she
So worthy is beloued to be
That she well ought of pryse and ryght
Be cleped Rose of euery wight
That it was May me thought tho
It is fyue yere or moze ago
That it was May, thus dremed me
In tyme of loue and iolyte
That al thynge gynneth waxen gay
For there is nether buske nor hay
In May, that it nyll shrouded bene
And it with newe leues wrene
These woddes eke recouren grene
That drye in wynter ben to sene
And the erth wexeth proude withall
For swote dewes that on it fall
And the poore estate forgette
In whiche that winter had it sette
And than become the grounde so proude
That it wol haue a newe shroude
And maketh so queynt his robe and fayre
That it had hewes an hundred payre
Of grasse and floures, ynde and pers
And many hewes ful diuers
That is the robe I mene iwys
Through which the ground to praysen is
The brydes that han left her songe
Whyle they han suffred colde ful stronge
In wethers grylle, and derke to sight
Ben in May, for the sonne bright
So glad, that they shewe in syngyng
That in her hert is suche lykyng
That they mote syngen and ben lyght
Than dothe the nightyngale her myght
To maken noyse, and syngen blythe
Than is blysful many a sythe
The chelaundre, and the popyngay
Than yonge folke entenden aye
For to ben gaye and amorous
The tyme is than so sauourous
Harde is his herte that loueth nought
In May, whan al this myrth is wrought
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale brydes syngen clere
Her blysful swete songe pytous
And in this seson delytous
Whan loue affirmeth al thyng
Me thought on ryght, in my slepyng
Right in my bed, ful redyly
That it was by the morowe erly
And vp I rose, and gan me clothe
Anon I wyssche myne hondes bothe
A syluer nedyl forth I drowe
Out of an aguyler queynt ynowe
And gan this nedyl threde anone
For out of towne me lyste to gone
The sowne of brydes for to here
That on the buskes syngen clere

That in the swete seson that lefe is
With a thede bataynge my sheuys
Alone I went in my playing
The smale foules songe herkenyng
That payned hem ful many a payre
To synge on bowes blossomed fayre
Joyfe and gaye, full of gladnesse
Towarde a ryuer gan I me dresse
That I herde renne fast by
For fayrer playen none saugh I
Than playen me by that ryuere
For from an hyll that stode there nere
Come downe the streme full styffe & bold
Clere was the water, and as cold
As any welle is, sothe to sayne
And somdele lasse it was than Mayne
But it was strayter, wele away
And neuer saugh I er that daye
The water that so wele lyked me
And wonder glad was I to se
That lusty place, and that ryuere
And with that water that ran so clere
My face I wysshe, tho sawe I wele
The botome ypaued euerydele
With grauel, ful of stones shene
The medowes softe, sote, and grene
Bret right on the water syde
Ful clere was than the morowe tyde
And ful attempre out of drede
Tho gan I walken thorowe the Mede
Downwarde ayr in my playeng
The ryuers syde coostyng.
And whan I had a while ygone
I sawe a Garden ryght anone
Ful long and brode, and euerydele
Enclosed was, and walled wele
With hye wales enbatayled
Portrayed without, and wel entayled
With many ryche portreytures
And both yet ymages and peyntures
Ean I beholde besely
And I wol tel you redely
Of thylke ymages the semblaunce
As ferre as I haue remembraunce.
¶ I myddeswe I hate stonde
That for her wrathe and yre, and onde
Semed to be a mynorelle
An angry wight a chidereſſe
And ful of gyle, and fell corage
By semblaunt was that ylke ymage
And she was nothyng wele arayde
But lyke a wode woman afrayde
Yfrounced foule was her visage
And grymmyng for dispitous rage
Her nose snorted vp for tene
Ful hydous was she for to sene
Ful foule and rusty was she this
Her heed y writhen was ywis
Ful grymly with a great towayle.
¶ Anymage of another entayle
A lytle halfe was her fast by
Her name aboue her heed sawe I
And she was called Felony
¶ Another ymage that Tyrlany
Ycleped was, sawe I and fonde
Upon the wall on her ryght honde
Tyrlany was lyke somdele
That other ymage, and trusterly wele
She semed a wicked creature
By countenaunce in portreyture
She semed be full dispytous
And eke ful proude, and outragious
Wel coude he payne I vndertake
That such an ymage coude make
Ful foule and shopyly semed she
And eke villeynous for to be
And lytel coulde of norture
To worshippe any creature.
¶ And nexte was payntrd Couetyse
That eggeth folke in many a gyse
To take and rene right nought agayne
And great treasours vp to layne
And that is she, that for vsure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more wynnyng
So couetous is her brennyng
And that is she for pennes frele
That techeth for to robbe and steele
These thenes, and these smale harlotes
And that is rourbe, for by her throtes
Ful many one hongeth at the last
She maketh folke compasse and cast
To taken other folkes thyng
Through robbery, or mysconeyeyng
And that is she that maketh trechours
And she maketh false pledours
That with her termes and her domes
Done maidens, childrin, and eke gromes
Her heritage to forgo
Ful croked were her hondes two
For couetyse is euer wode
To gripen other folkes goode
Couetyse, for her wynnyng
Ful lefe hath other mennes thyng
¶ Another ymage set saugh I
Nexte Couetyse fast by

And

And she was cleped Auarice
Ful foule in payntyng was that vice
Ful sad and caytife was she eke
And also grene as any leke
So puel hewed was her colour
Her semed to haue lyued in langour
She was lyke thyng for hunger deed
That had her lyfe onely by breed
Kneden with eyser strong and egre
And therto she was leane and megre
And she was clad ful poorely
Al in an olde rozne courtpy
As she were all with dogges tozne
And both behynde and eke before
Clouted was she beggerly
A mantel honge her fast by
Upon a benche weyke and smal
A barnette cote honge there withal
Furred with no menyuere
But with a furre rough of heere
Of lambe skynnes heuy and blacke
It was full olde I vnder take
For Auarice to clothe her wele
Me thinketh her neuer a dele
For certaynly it were her lothe
To wearen of that ilke clothe
And if it were forweared, she
Wolde haue ful great nyeede
Of clothyng, er she bought her newe
Al were it bad of wol and hewe
This Auarice held in her hande
A purse that hong by a bande
And that she kyd and bonde so stronge
Men muste abyde wonder longe
Out of the purse er there come ought
For that ne cometh in her thought
It was not certaine her entent
That fro that purse a peny went
And by that ymage nygh ynough
Was paynted Enuy that eurt lough
Nor neuer wel in her hert ferde
But if she eyther sawe or herde
Some great mischaunce, or gret disese
Nothyng may so much her plese
As myschefe and misauenture
Or when she seeth discomfyture
Upon any worthy man fall
Than lyketh her wel withall
She is ful glad in her corage
Yf she se any great lynage
Be brought to naught, in shamful wyse
And if a man in honour ryse
Or by hys wyt, or by hys prowesse
Of that hath she great heuynesse
For trusteth well she goth nye wood
When any chaunce hapeth good
Enuye is of suche cruelte
That fayth ne trouth holdeth she
To frende ne felowe, badde or good
Ne she hath kynne none of her blood
That she nys ful her enemy
She nolde, I dare sayne hardely
Her owne father fared wele
And sore abyeth she euery dele
Her malyce, and her male talent
For she is in so great turment
And hate suche, when folke doth good
That nyghe she melteth for pure wood
Her hert kerueth and so breketh
That god the people wel awreketh
Enuy iwys shall neuer let
Some blame vpon the folke to set
I trowe that if Enuye iwys
Knewe the best man that is
On thys syde or beyonde the see
Yet sowmwhat lacken him wold she
And if he were so hende and wyse
That she ne might all abate hys prise
Yet wolde she blame his worthynesse
Or by her wordes make it lesse
I sawe Enuye in that paynting
Had a wonderful lokyng
For she ne loked but awrye
Or ouerthwarte, all baggyngly
And she had a foule vsage
She myght loke in no vysage
Of man ne woman, forth right playne
But shette her one eye for disdayne
So for enuye brenned she
When she might any man se
That fayre, or worthy were, or wyse
Or elis stode in folkes prise
Sorowe was paynted next Enuye
Upon that wal of masonrye
But wel was sene in her colour
That she had lyued in langour
Her semed to haue the saundice
Not halfe so pale was Auaryce
Ne nothyng lyke of leanesse
For sorowe, thought, and great distresse
That she had suffred day and nyght
Made her yelowe, and nothynge bryght
Ful fade, pale, and megre also
Was neuer weyght yet halfe so wo
As that her semed for to be
Nor so fulfylled with pyte, as she

I trow that no wight might her plese
Nor do that thing that might her ese
Nor she ne wolde her sorowe slake
Nor comforte none unto her take
So depe was her wo begonne
And eke her hert in angre ronne
A sorowful thyng well semed she
Nor she had nothyng slowe be
For to cratchen al her face
And for to rent in many place
Her clothes, and for to reare her swyre
As she that was fulfylled of yre
And all to tore lay eke her heere
Aboute her shulders, here and there
As she that had it all to rent
For angre and for male talent
And eke I tel you certaynly
How that she wepte full tenderly
In world nis wight so harde of herte
That had sene her sorowes smerte
That nolde haue had of her pyte
So wo begon a thyng was she
She al to dasht her selfe for wo
And smote togyder her hondes two
To sorowe was she ful ententyfe
That woful recheleſſe caytyfe
Her rought lytle of playeng
Or of clypping or kyssyng
For who so sorowful is in herte
Him lust not to play ne sterte
Ne for to daunsen, ne to synge
Ne may his hert in temper bringe
To make ioye on euen or morowe
For ioy is contrary unto sorowe.

Elde was paynted after this
That shorter was a foote twys
Than she was wonte in her yonghede
Unneth her selfe she myght fede
So febie and eke so olde was she
That faded was al her beaute
Ful falowe was waxen her colour
Her heed for hoore was whyte as flour
Iwys great qualme ne were it none
Ne syme, although her lyfe were gone
All worsen was her body unweldy
And dry and dwyned al for elde
A foule forwelked thinge was she
That whilom rounde and softe had be
Her heeres shoken fast withall
As from her heed they wolde fall
Her face frounced and forpyned
And bothe her hondes lorne fordwyned
So olde she was, that ne went
A foote, but it were by potent
The tyme that passeth nyght and daye
And restleſſe transpyreth aye
And stealeth from us so pryuely
That to us semeth sykerly
That it in one poynt dwelleth euer
And certes it ne resteth neuer
But goth so faste, and passeth aye
That there nys man that thinke may
What tyme that nowe present is
Abideth at these clerkes this
For men thynke it redily
Thre tymes ben passed by
The tyme that may not soiourne
But goth, and may neuer retourne
As water that downe renneth aye
But neuer dropp retourne maye
There may nothynge as tyme endure
Mortal, nor erthly creature
For all thynge is keepte and shal
The tyme eke that chaungeth al
And al doth waxe, and forfered be
And al thynge distroyeth he
The tyme that elder our aunsestours
And elder kynges and emperours
And that us all shall overcomen
Er that derth us shall haue nomen
The tyme that hath all in welde
To elden folke had made her elde
So inly, that to my wetyng
She myght helpe her selfe nothyng
But turned ayen unto childhede
She had nothynge her selfe to lede
Ne wyte ne pythe in her holde
More than a childe of two yere olde
But natheleſſe I trowe that she
Was fayre somtyme, and freshe to se
Whan she was in her ryghtfull age
But she was past all that passage
And was a doted thyng beromen
A furred cappe on had she nomen
Wel had she clad her selfe and warme
For colde myght els done her harme
These olde folke haue alwey colde
Her kynde is suche, whan they ben olde.

Another thyng was don ther wyt
That semed lyke an Ipocryt
And it was cleped Pope Holy
That like is she, that pryuely
Ne spareth neuer a wycked dede
Whan men of her taken none hede
And maketh her outwarde pteryous
With pale vysage and pytous

And

And semeth a simple creature
But there nis no misaventure
That she ne thynketh in her corage
Ful lyke to her was thilke image
That maked was lyke her semblaunce
She was ful simple of countenaunce
And she was clothed and eke shod
As she were for the loue of god
Yolden to religion
Suche semed her deuocion
Apsaulter helde she fast in honde
And besyly she gan to fonde
To make many a fayne prayere
To god, and to his sayntes dere
Yet she was gaye, fresh, ne foryete
But semed to be ful ententyfe
To good werkes, and to fayre
And therto she had on an hayre
Yet certes she was fatte nothyng
But semed wery for fastyng
Of colourre pale and dred was she
From her the gates aye warned be
Of paradise, that blyssfull place
For suche folke maken leane her grace
As Christ sayth in hys Euangyle
To gette hem prise in town a whyle
And for a tyrell glorye beigne
They leesen god and eke his reygne.
And alderlast of euerychone
Was paynted Pouert al alone
That not a peny had in holde
Although she her clothes solde
And though she shulde an honged be
For naked as a worme was she
And if the wether stormy were
For colde she shulde haue dyed there
She ne had on but a strayte olde sacke
And many a cloute on it there stacke
This was her cote, and her mantele
No more was ther neuer a dele
To clothe her with, I undertake
Great leaser had she to quake
And she was put, that I of talke
Ferre fro these other, by in an halke
There lurked, and there coured she
For poore thyng where so it be
Is shamefaste, and dispysed aye
I cursed may wel be that daye
That poore man conceyued is
For god wote al to selde ywis
Is any poore man wel yfedde
Or wel arayed or ycledde
Or wel beloued, in suche wyse
In honour, that he maye aryse.
All these thynges well auysed
As I haue you er this deuised
With golde and asure ouer all
Depaynted were vpon the wall
Square was the wall, and high somdele
Enclosed, and ybarred wele
In stede of hegge, was that gardin
Come neuer shepherde therin
In to that gardyn, wel wrought
Who so that me couldе haue brought
By ladders, or elis by degre
It wolde well haue lyked me
For suche solace, suche ioye, and play
I trowe that neuer man ne sey
As was in that place delicious
The gardyn was not daungerous
To herbrowe wel birdes many one
So riche a yere was neuer none
Of brydes songe, and braunches grene
Therin were brydes mo I wene
Than ben in al the realme of Fraunce
Ful blyssfull was the accordaunce
Of swete petous songe they made
For al this worlde it ought glade
And I my selfe so mery ferde
Whan I her blissful songes herde
That for an hundred pounde wolde I
If that the passage openly
Had be vnto me fre
That I nolde entren for to se
Thassemble, god kepe it fro care
Of brydes, whiche therein ware
That songen through her mery throtes
Daunces of loue, and mery notes.

Whan I thus herde foules synge
I fel faste in a waymentyng
By whiche arte, or by what engyn
I might come in to that gardyn
But way I couthe fynde none
Into that gardyn for to gone
Ne nought wyst I if that there were
Either hole or place where
By whiche I might haue entre
Ne there was none to teche me
For I was al alone ywis
For wo and anguyshe of this
Tyl at laste bethought I me
That by no way ne might it be
That there nas ladder ne way to pace
Or hole, in to so fayre a place
Tho gan I go a ful great pace

Enuyron, euen in compas
The cloſyng of the ſquare wall
Tyl that I founde a wyket ſmall
So ſhette, that I ne might in gone
And other entre was there none.

Upon this doze I gan to smyte
That was ferys, and ſo lyte
For other waye could I not ſeke
Ful long I ſhote, and knocked eke
And ſtode ful long al herkening
Yf that I herde any wight comyng
Tyl that the doze of thilke entre
A mayden curteys opened me
Her heere was as yelow of hewe
As any baſen ſcoured newe
Her fleſhe tender as is a chyke
With bent browes, ſmothe and ſlyke
And by meſure large were
The openyng of her eyen clere
Her noſe of good proporcyon
Her eyen gray, as is a faucon
With ſwete breth, and wel ſauoured
Her face white, and wel coloured
With lytel mouth and rounde to ſe
A clone chynne eke had ſhe
Her necke was of good faſſyon
In length and greatneſſe by reſon
Without bleyne, ſcabbe, or royne
Fro Hieruſalem vnto Burgoyne
There nys a fayzer necke ſwys
To ſeie how ſmothe and ſofte it is
Her throte alſo white of hewe
As ſnowe on braunce ſnowed newe
Of body ful wel wrought was ſhe
Men neden not in no countre
A fayzer body for to ſeke
And of fyne Orfrays had ſhe eke
A chapelet, ſo ſemely on
Ne neuer wered mayde vpon
And fayre aboue that chapelet
A roſe garlande had ſhe ſet
She had a gay myrrour
And with a riche golde treſour
Her hed was treſſed queynt ly
Her ſleues ſewed fetouſly
And for to kepe her hondes fayre
Of gloues white ſhe had a payre
And ſhe had on a cote of grene
Of clouth of Gaunt, withouten wene
Wel ſemed by her apparayle
She was not wont to great trauayle
For whan ſhe krempt was ferrouſly
And wel arayed and eychely
Than had ſhe done al her iourney
For mery and wel begon was ſhe
She ladde a ioly lyfe in May
She had no thought, by nyght ne day
Of nothyng, but if it were onely
To grayeth her wel and vncouthly.

Whan that this doze had opened me
Thys May, ſemely for to ſe
I thonked her as I beſt myght
And aſked her howe that ſhe hyght
And what ſhe was, I aſked eke
And to me was nought vnmeke
Ne of her anſwere daungerous
But fayre anſwerde, and ſayd thus
Lo ſir, my name is Idelneſſe
So clepe men me, more and leſſe
Ful mighty and ful ryche am I
And that of one thynge namely
For I entende to nothyng
But to my ioy, and my playeng
And for to bembe and trefle me
Aquaynted am I and priue
With Myrthe, lorde of thys gardyn
That fro the lande of Alexandryne
Made the trees hyther be ferte
That in this gardyne ben ſtedde
And when the trees were woxen an hight
Thys wall, that ſtaunt here in thy ſyght
Dyd Myrthe enclooſen al aboute
And theſe ymages al withoute
Dyd hem bothe entayle and payne
That neyther ben lolyke ne quayne
But they been full of ſorowe and wo
As thou haſt ſene a whyle ago.

And ofte tyme hym to ſolace
Sir Myrthe cometh in to this place
And eke with hym cometh his meyne
That lyuen in luſte and lolyte
And nowe is Myrthe therin, to here
The bryddes howe they ſyngen clere
The mauis and the nyghtyngale
And other ioly bryddes ſmale
And thus he walketh to ſolace
Hym and hys folke, for ſwetter place
To playen in, he may not fynde
Al though he ſought one in tyl Inde
The alther fayreſt for to ſe
That in thys worlde may founde be
Hath Myrth with hym in hys route
That folowen hym al wayes aboute

Whan Idelneſſe had tolde al this
And I had harkened wel ywis
Than ſayde I to dame Idelneſſe
Lowe alſo willy god me bleſſe
Syth Myrthe, that is ſo fayre and fre
Is in this verde, with his meyne
Fro thylke aſſemble, yf I may
Shal no man werne me to day
That I this night ne mote it ſe
For wel wene I there with him be
In fayre and ioly companye
Fulfylled of al curteſye
And fourth without wordes mo
In at the wicket went I tho
That Idelneſſe had opened me
In to that gardyn fayre to ſe.

And whan I was in ywis
Myn herte was ful glad of this
For wel wende I ful ſykerly
Haue ben in paradiſe erthly
So fayre it was, that truſteth wel
It ſemed a place eſpirituell
For certes as at my deuyſe
There is no place in paradyſe
So good in for to dwell or be
As in that gardyn thought me
For there was many a birde ſingyng
Throughout the verde al thringyng
In many places were nightyngales
Pies, fynches, and wodwales
That in her ſwete ſonge delyten
In thilke places as they habyten
There might men ſe many flockes
Of turtels and lauerockes
Chalaundres fele ſawe I there
That wery vpghe forſongen were
And thruſtels, ſterns, and mauyſe
That ſongen for to winne hem priſe
And eke to ſurmount in her ſonge
That other birdes hem amonge
By note made fayre ſeruyſe
Theſe birdes, that I you deuyſe
They ſonge her ſonge, as fayre and wel
As angels done eſpirituel
And truſteth me, whan I hem herde
Ful luſty and wel I ferde
For neuer yet ſuche melodye
Was herde, of man that myght dye
Suche ſwete ſonge was hem amonge
That me thought it no birdes ſonge
But it was wonder lyke to be
Songe of Meremaydens of the ſee
That for her ſynging is ſo clere
Though we marmaydens clepe hem here
In engliſhe, as is our vſaunce
Men clepe hem Sereyns in Fraunce

Attentyfe weren for to ſynge
Theſe birdes, that not vnkonnyng
Were of her crafte, and attentyfe
But of ſonge ſubtyl and wyſe
And certes, whan I herde her ſonge
And ſawe the grene place amonge
In hert I went ſo wonder gay
That I was neuer erſt, er that day
So iolyfe, nor ſo wel bygo
Ne mery in hert, as I was tho
And than wyſt I, and ſawe ful wel
That ydelneſſe me ſerued wel
That me put in ſuche iolyte
Her frende well ought I for to be
Syth ſhe the dore of that gardyn
Had opened, and me lette in.

From hence forth, howe that I wrouȝte
I ſhal you telle, as me thought
Firſt wherof Myrthe ſerued ther
And eke what folke there with him were
Ar ithout fable I wol diſcriue
And of that gardyn eke as blyue
I wol you tellen after this
The fayre faſſion al ywis
That wel wrought was for the nones
I may not tell you all atones
But as I maye and can, I ſhall
By ordre tellen you it all
Ful fayre ſeruice, and eke ful ſwete
Theſe birdes maden as they ſete
Layes of loue, full wel ſownyng
They ſongen in her targonyng
Some hye, and ſome eke lowe ſonge
Upon the braunches grene yſpronge
The ſweteneſſe of her melodye
Made al myn herte in reuelrye
And whan that I herd I trowe
Theſe birdes ſyngyng on a rowe
Than might I not withholde me
That I ne wente in for to ſe
Sir Myrthe, for my deſiryng
Was him to ſene ouer al thyng
His countenaunce and hys manere
That ſyght was to me ful dere.

Tho went I forth on my right hōde
Downe by a lytel path I fonde

Of myrthes ful, and feuell grene
And faste by without wene
Sir Wythe I founde, and right anon
Vnto sir Wirthe gan I gon
There as he was hym to solace
And with hym, in that lusty place
So fayre folke and so freshe had he
That whan I sawe, I wondred me
Fro whence suche folke might come
So fayre they weren al and some
For they were lyke, as to my syght
To angels, that been ferhered bryght.
These folke, of whiche I tell you so
Upon a karole wenten tho
A lady kadred hem, that bryght
Gladnesse, blysful and lyght
Well coulde she synge and lustely
None halfe so wel and semely
And couth make in songe suche refrayning
It sate her wonder well to synge
Her voyce full clere was and ful swete
She was not rude ne vnmete
But couthe ynough of suche doing
As longeth vnto karollyng
For she was wonte in euery place
To syngen first, folke to solace
For syngyng moste she gaue her to
No crafte had she so lefe to do.

Tho myghtest thou karolles sene
And folke daunce and merry bene
And made many a fayre turnynge
Upon the grene grasse sprynginge
There myghtest thou se these flutours
Mynstrales and eke iogleurs
That well to synge dyd her payne
Some songe songes of Lorayne
For in Lorayne her notes be
Full sweter than in this countre
There was manye a tymbestere
And saylours, that I dare wel swere
Couthe her crafte full parfytly
The tymbres vp full subtelly
They caste, and hent full ofte
Upon a fynger fayre and softe
That they fayled neuer mo.
Ful ferys damoiseis two
Ryght yonge, and ful of semelyhede
In kyrtels, and none other wede
And fayre tressed euery tresse
Had Wythe done for hys noblesse
Amydde the carole for to daunce
But herof lyeth no remembraunce
Howe that they daunsed queyntly
That one wolde come all prively
Ayen that other, and whan they were
Togither almoste, they threwe yfere
Her mouthes so, that through her play
It semed as they kyste alway
To dauncen wel couthe they the gyse
What shoulde I more to you deuyse
Ne bode I neuer thence go
Whyles that I sawe hem daunce so
Upon the karoll wonder faste
I gan beholde, tyll at laste
A lady gan me for to espye
And she was cleped Curtesye
The worthyfull, the debonayre
I pray to god euer fall her fayre
Ful Curtesly she called me
What do ye ther Beau sire (qd she)
Come, and yf it lyke you
To dauncen, daunseth with vs nowe
And I without taryeng
Wente in to the karolyng
I was abasshed neuer a dele
But it to me lyked tyght wele
That Curtesye me cleped so
And bade me on the daunce go
For if I had durste certayne
I wolde haue karolled tyght
As man that was to daunce tyght blythe
That can I loken ofte sythe
The shap, the bodyes, and the cheres
The countenaunce and the maneres
Of al the folke that daunced there
And I shal tell what they were.

Ful fayre was Wythe, ful longe & high
A fayrer man I neuer sygh
As rounde as aple was hys face
Ful roddy and whyte in euery place
Fetys he was and wel besey
With metely mouthe, and eyen grey
His nose by mesure wrought ful right
Crispe was his heere, and eke ful bryght
His shulders of large brede
And smalyche in the gyrdelstede
He semed lyke a purtreyture
So noble he was of hys stature
So fayre, so ioly, and so feryse
With lymmes wrought at poynt deuyse
Delyuer, smerte, and of great myght
Ne sawe thou neuer man so lyght
Of berde vneth had he nothyng
For it was in the first spryng

Full

ful yonge he was, and mery of thought
And in samette, with bryddes wrought
And with golde beten full fetously
His body was clad full rychely
Wrought was hys robe in straunge gyse
And al to slytered for queynt yse
In many a place, lowe and hye
And thode he was with great maistrye
With thorne detroped, and with lace
By drury, and by solace
His left a rosen chapelet
Had made, and on his heed it set
And were ye who was hys leke
Dame Gladnesse there was hym soleke
That syngeth so well with glad corage
That from she was twelue yere of age
She of her loue graunte hym made
Hit Wyth her by the fyngers hade
Daunsyng, and she hym also
Great loue was a twixt hem two
Fetde wer they sayre and bright of hewe
She semed lyke a rose newe
Of colours, and her flesshe so tender
That with a sterre smale and tender
Men might it cleue, I dare wel sey
Her forherd frouncyes al pley
Ful were her browes two
Persyen graye, and glad also
That laughed en aye in her semblaunt
Full of the mouthe by couenaunt
I wot not what of her nose I shal di-
No fayre hath no woman a lyue (scribe
Her heere was yelowe, and clere shynyng
I wot no lady so lyking
Of Dayses fresshe, was her garlande
I whiche semed haue a thousande
Hawe neuer yet no garlande yet
So wel wrought of syke as it
And in an ouer gyte sampte
Clad she was, by great delyte
Of whiche her left a robe werde
The merrier she in her hert ferde
And next her went, on her other syde
The god of loue, that can deuyde
Loue, and as hym lyketh it be
But he can cherles daunten, he
And maken folkes pryde fallen
And he can wel these lordes thrallen
And ladyes put at lowe degre
Whan he may hem to pryde se.

This god of loue of his facion
Was lyke no knaue, ne quistron
His beautie greatly was to prise
But of his robe to deuyse
I drede encombred for to be
For not yclad in syke was he
But al in floures and flouretes
Ypayned all with amorettes
And with losenges and scochons
With bryddes, lybardes, and lyons
And other bestes wrought ful wele
His garment was euery dele
Ypurtrayed and ywrought with floures
By dyuers medelyng of colours
Floures there were of many gyse
Yset by compace in a syse
There lacked no floure to my doom
Ne not so muche as floure of brome
Ne byolet, ne eke peruynke
Ne floure none, that men can on thynke
And many a rose lefe ful longe
Was entermedled there amonge
And also on his heed was set
Of roses reed a chapelet
But nygtyngales a full great route
That flyen ouer his heed aboute
The leaues felden as they flyen
And he was all with bryddes wryen
With popyngay, with nygtyngale
With chalaundre, and with wodewale
With fynche, with larke, and with archangell
He semed as he were an angell
That downe were comen fro heuen clere
Loue had with hym a bacheler
That he made alwayes with hym be
Swete Lokyng, cleped was he
This bacheler stode beholdyng
The daunce, and in hys honde holdyng
Turke bowes two, ful well deuysed had
That one of hem was of a tree (he
That beareth a fruite of sauour wicke
Ful croked was that foule sticke
And knotty here and there also
And blacke as bery, or any slo
That other bowe was of a plante
Without wemme, I dare warante
Ful euen and by proporcyon
Trectes & longe, of ful good facyon
And it was paynted wel and twhitten
And ouer al dyapred and written
With ladyes and with bacheleres
Ful lyghtsome and glad of cheres
These bowes two held Swete Loking
That semed lyke no gadling
And ten brode arowes helde he there

Of

Of whiche fyue in hys honde were
But they were headed wel and bryght
Nocked and fethered aryght
And al they were with golde begon
And stronge poynted enuenymed
And sharpe for to herten wele
But yron was there none ne stele
For all was golde, men wyght so
Out take the fethers and the tre

The swiftest of these arowes fyue
Out of a bowe for to dryue
And best fethered for to flye
And fayrest eke was cleped Beaute
That other arowe that hyghte lesse
Was cleped (as I trowe) Symplesse
The thirde cleped was Fraunchyse
That fethered was in noble wyse
With valour and with curtesye
The fourth was cleped companye
That heuy for to shoten is
But who so shoteth right iwis
May therwith don great harme and wo
The fifte of these, and lasse also
Fayre Semblaunt men that arowe call
The leest greuous of hem all
Yet can it make a full greus wounde
But he may hope hys sores sounde
That hurte is with that arowe ywis
Hys wo the bette bestowed is
For he may soner haue gladnesse
Hys langour ought be the lesse.

Fyue arowes were of other gyse
That ben ful foule to deuyse
For thafte and ende sothe for to tell
Were also blacke as fende in hell
The firste of hem is called Pryde
That other arowe nexte hym besyde
Je was cleped Vylanye
That arowe was, as with felonye
Enuenymed, and with spytous blame
The thirde of hem was cleped Shame
The fourthe Wanhope cleped is
The fifte the Newe thought ywis

These arowes that I speke of here
Were all fyue on one manere
And all were they resemblable
To hem was wel syttyng and able
The foule croked bowe hydous
That knotty was, and al roynous
That bowe semed wel to shete
The arowes fyue, that hem fortrete
And contrary to that other fyue
But though I tell not as blyue
Of her power, ne of hem myght
Hereafter shal I tellen aright
The sothe, and eke the signifiaunce
As ferre as I haue remembraunce
All that be sayd I vnderfake
Er of this boke an ende I make.

Now come I to my tale agayne
But aldersirst I wol you sayne
The fashyon and the countenaunces
Of all the folke that on the daunce is
The god of Loue folyte and lyghte
Ladde on his honde a lady bryght
Of highe pryse, and of great degre
This lady called was Beaute
And an arowe, of which I tolde
Ful wel thewed was she holde
Ne she was bothe ne browne, but bryghte
And clere as the moone lyghte
I gayne whom al the sterres semen
But smale canbeis, as we demen
Her flesshe was tender as dewe of flour
Her chere was symple as byrde in bour
As whyte as lylye or rose in ryse
Her face gentyll and treatyse
Feryr she was, and smale to se
No [illegible]ntred browes had she
Ne popped her, for it neded nought
To wyndze her, or to purfyle her ought
Her tresses yelowe, a longe straughten
Vnto her heles downe they raughten
Her nose, her mouthe, her eye and cheke
Wel wrought, and al the remnaunt eke
I ful great sauour and a swote
Me thought in myne hert rote
As helpe me god, whan I remembre
Of the fashion of euery membre
In world is none so fayre a wight
For yong she was, and hewed bryght
Ioye pleasaunt, and feryr with all
Gent, and in her myddel small
Besyde Beaute yede Rychesse
And bryght lady of great noblesse
And great of pryce in euery place
But who so durste to her trespace
Or tyl her folke, in worde or dede
He were ful hardy out of drede
For bothe she helpe and hyndre may
And that is not of yesterday
That riche folke haue ful great myght

To helpe, and eke to greue wight
The beſt and greateſt of valour
Wydden Richeſſe ful great honour
And beſy weren her to ſerue
For that they wolde her loue deſerue
They cleped her Lady great and ſmal
This wide world her dredeth al
This world is al in her daungere
Her court hath many a loſengere
And many a traytour enuyous
That ben ful beſy and curious
For to diſpreyſe, and to blame
That beſt deſeruen loue and name
To fame the folke hem to begyten
Thoſe loſengeours hem preyſe & ſmyten
And thus the world ith word anoynten
But afterwarde they pull and poynten
The folke, right to the bare bone
Behynde her backe whan they ben gone
And foule abaten folkes priſe
Full many a worthy man and wyſe
Hath hindred, and y don to dye
Theſe loſengeours with her flatery
And maketh folke ful ſtraunge be
There as hem ought ben priue
Wel ruel more they thriue and thee
And ruel aryued more they be
Theſe loſengeours ful of enuy
Ne good man louyth her company.

Richeſſe a robe of purple on had
Me trowe nat that I lye or mad
For in this worlde is none it lyche
Ne by a thouſande dele ſo ryche
Ne none ſo fayre, for it ful wele
With Orfreys leyde was euerydele
And purtrayde in the rybanynges
Of dukes ſtoryes, and of kynges
And with a bende of golde taſſyled
And knoppes fyne of gold amyled
About her necke of grenyl entayle
Was thette the ryche Theueſayle
In whiche there was ful great plente
Of ſtones clere, and fayre to ſe.
Richeſſe a gyrdle had vpon
The bokel of it was of a ſton
Of bertue great, and mokell of myght
For who ſo bare the ſtone ſo bright
Of venym durſt him nothyng dout
While he the ſtone had him about
That ſtone was greatly for to loue
And tyl a riche mans behoue
Worthal the golde in Rome, and Fryſe
The Mourdant wrought in noble gyſe
Was of a ſtone ful preyous
That was ſo fyne and bertuous
That whole a man it couth make
Of paliye, and of tothe ake
And yet the ſtone had ſuche a grace
That he was ſeker in euery place
Al thylke day not blynde to bene
That faſtyng might that ſtone ſene
The barres were of golde ful fyne
Upon a tyſſue of Satyne
Ful heuy, great, and nothyng lyght
In euerych was a beſaunt wight
Upon the treſſes of rycheſſes
Was ſet a cercle of nobleſſe
Of bryende golde, that ful light ſhone
So fayre trowe I was neuer none
But he were konnyng for the nones
That coulde deuyſe al the ſtones
That in that cercle ſhewen clere
It is a wonder thyng to here
For no man coulde preyſe or geſſe
Of hem the value or richeſſe
Rubyes there wer, Saphirs, Ragounces
And Emeraudes, more than two ounces
But al before ful ſubtelly
A fyne Charboncle ſet ſaw I
The ſtone ſo clere was and ſo bright
That al ſo ſone as it was night
Men might ſene to go for nede
A myle or two, in length and brede
Suche light ſprange out of the ſtone
That richeſſe wonder bright ſhone
Both her heed, and all her face
And eke aboute her al the place
Dame richeſſe on her honde gan lede
A yonge man full of ſemelyhede
That ſhe beſt loued of any thyng
His luſt was much in houſholdyng
In clothyng was he ful fetyſe
And loued wel to haue horſe of priſe
He wende to haue repryued be
Of theſte or murdre, if that he
Had in his ſtable an hackenay
And therfore he deſyred aye
To ben aqueynted with Richeſſe
For al his purpoſe, as I geſſe
Was for to make great diſpence
Withouten warnyng or defence
And Richeſſe might it wele ſuſtene
And her diſpences wele mayntene
And hym alway ſuche plentie ſende
Of golde and ſyluer for to ſpende

Without lacchyng or daungere
As it were pourde in a garnere.

And after on the daunce went
Largesse, that set al her entent
For to ben honorable and free
Of Alexanders kynne was she
Her most ioye was ywis
Whan that she yaf, and sayd: haue this
Not Auarice the foule caytyfe
Was halfe to grype so enteneyfe
As Largesse is, to yeue and spende
And goth alway ynowe her fende
So that the more she yaue awaye
The more ywis she had alwaye
Great loos hath Largesse, a great pryse
For both wyse folke and unwyse
Were wholy to her bandon brought
So wel with vertes hath she wrought
And if she had an enemy
I trowe that she couth craftely
Make him ful sone her frende to be
So large of vertes, and wyse was she
Therfore she stode in loue and grace
Of riche and poore in euery place
A ful great foole is he ywis
That both riche and poore, and nigarde is
A lorde may haue no maner pryce
That greueth more than Auarice
For nygarde neuer with strength of hand
May wynne hym greate lordshyp or land
For frendes al to fewe hath he
To done his wyl performed be
And who so wol haue frendes here
He may not holde his treasour dere
For by ensample tel I thys
Right as an adamant ywis
Can drawen to him subtelly
The yron, that is layde therby
So draweth folkes hertes ywis
Syluer and golde that yeuen is
Largesse had on a robe freshe
Of ryche purpure Sarlynisshe
Wel fourmed was her face and clere
And opened had she her colere
For she right there had in present
Unto a lady made present
Of a gold broche, ful wel wrought
And certes it missate her nought
For through her smocke wrought ne sikke
The flesshe was sene as white as mylke
Largesse, that worthy was and wyse
Helde by the hond a knyght of pryse
Was sybbe to Arthour of Bretaigne
And that was he that bare the enseigne
Of worthyp, and the Gouffanoun
And yet he is of suche renoun
That men of him say fayre thynges
Before barons, erles, and kynges
This knyght was couen al newly
Fro tourneyeng fast by
There had he done great chyualrie
Through his bertue and his maistrie
And for the loue of his lemman
He cast downe many a doughty man
And next him daunced dame Fraunchise
Arayed in ful noble gyse
She nas not browne ne dunne of hewe
But whyte as snowe yfallen newe
Her nose was wrought at poynt deuyse
For it was gentyl and tretyse
With eyen glad, and browes bent
Her heere downe to her hries went
And she was symple as downe on tree
Ful debonayre of hert was she
She durste neither say ne do
But that, that fayr longeth to
And if a man were in distresse
And for her loue in heynesse
Her hert wolde haue ful great pyte
She was so amyable and free
For [illegible]re a man for her bestadde
Sh[illegible]wold ben right sore a dradde
That she dyd ouer great outrage
But she hym helpe his harme tasswage
Her thought it al a bylame
And she had on a sukeny
That not of hempe herdes was
So fayre was none in al Arras
Lorde it was cydded ferysly
There nas not a poynt trewly
That it nas in his right assyse
Ful wel yclothed was Fraunchise
For there nys no clothe sytteth bette
On damoisel, than doth roketте
A woman wel more feryse is
In roketте, than in cote ywis
The whyte roketте cydded fayre
Betokeneth that ful debonayre
And swete was she that it bere
By her daunced a Bacheler
I can not tellen you what he hyght
But fayre he was and of good hyght
Al had he ben, I say no more
The lordes sonne of Wyndesore.
And next that daunced Curtesy

That

That pitied was of lowe and lyte
For nother proude ne fole was she
She sor to daunce called me
I praye god graue her good grace
For when I come first into the place
She nas not vyce, ne outragrous
But wyse and ware, and bertuous
Of fayre speche, and fayre answere
As neuer wight myssayde of here
She bare no rancour to no wyght
Clere browne she was, and therto bryght
Of face and body auenaunt
I wote no lady so plesaunt
She were wort by for to bene
Empresse or crowned quene.
And by her went a knyght daunceyng
That worthy was and wel speknyng
And ful wel coude he don honour
The knyght was fayre and slyke in flour
And in armure a semely man
And wel beloued of his lemman.
(Fayre I deuise) than sawgh I
That alway was me fast by
Of her haue I without fayle
Tolde you the shape and apparayle
For (as I finde) Lo, that was she
That dyd to me so great bounte
She the gate of that gardyn
Undyd, and let me passen in
And after daunced as I gesse
And she fulfylled of lustynesse
That nas not yet xii. yere of age
With here wyde, and thought bolage
Ryper she was, but thy ne mente
None harme ne vleyght in her entente
But onely luste and solyte
For youge folke, wel wetest ye
Haue lyte thought, but on her play
Her lemman was besyde alway
In suche a gyse that he her kyste
At alsones that him lyste
That al the daunce myght it se
They make no force of preuyte
For who so spake of hem yuel or wele
They were ashamed neuer a dele
But men might sene hem kysse there
As it two yonge doues were
For yonge was eyther bachelere
Of beaute wot I non his pere
And he was wyght of suche an age
As Youth his lefe, and suche corage
The lusty folke that daunced there
And also other that with hem were
That weren all of her meyne
Ful hende folke, wyse, and free
And folke of fayre porte truely
There were al comenly
When I had sene the countenaunces
Of hem that ladden thus these daunces
Than had I wyll to gon and se
The gardyn that so lyked me
And loken on these fayre Laurelles
On Pyne trees, Cedres, and Olyueres
The daunces than ended were
For many of hem that daunced there
Were with her loues went away
Under the trees to haue her play.

A Lorde they lyued lustely
I great foole were he sykerly
That nolde his thankes suche lyfe lede
For this dare I sayne out of drede
That who so myght so well fare
For better lyfe durste him not care
For there nys so good paradyse
As to haue a loue at his deuyse
Out of that place went I tho
And in that gardyn gan I go
Playeng a longe ful merely
The god of Loue ful hastely
Unto him Swete Lokyng clept
No lenger wolde he that she kept
His bowe of golde, that shone so bright
He had him bent anon right
And he ful soone set an ende
And at a brayde he gan it bende
And toke him of his arowes fyue
Ful sharpe and redy for to dryue
Now god that syttest in maieste
Fro deedly woundes he kepe me
If so be that he had me shete
For if I with his arowe mete
It had me greued sore ywis
But I that nothyng wyst of this
Went by and downe, ful many a way
And he me folowed fast alway
But no where wolde I rest me
Tyll I had in al the gardyn be.

The gardyn was by meseryng
Right euen a square in copassyng
It as longe was as it was large
Of fruite had every tree his charge
But it were any hydous tree
Of whiche there were two or three
There were, and that wote I full wele

Of plomyn,pomecedrat,and fygge tree
That is a fruyt full swete to sene
Namely to folke whom that hem lyke
And ryers there were,grete foyson
That bearen rooses in their season
Suche as men rede ryngers call
That swote of sauour ben withall
And Almandyes great plente
Fyggers,and many a date tre
There weren,if men had nede
Thrugh the gardyn,in length and brede
There was eke wexyng many a spyce
As clowe gylofre,and lycorice
Gyngere,and grayn de Paris
Canell,and fenewale of pris
And many a spyce delytable
To eten whan men ryse fro table
And many homely trees there were
That perbes,chynes,and apples bere
Medlers,plommes,peeres,chesteynis
Cherise,of whiche many one fayne is
Notes,alays,and boias
That for to fyne it was folas
With many hygh laurer,and pyne
Was renged eyrne al that gardyne
With Cipres,and with Oliueris
Of whiche that nygh no plenty here is
There were Elmes great and stronge
Maples,asshe,oke,aspe,planes longe
Fyne ewe,popler,and lyndes fayre
And other trees full many a payre
What shuld I tel you more of it
There were so many trees yet
That I shulde al encombred be
Er I had rekened euery tree
These trees were set that I deuyse
One from another in assyse
Fyue fadome of fure, I trowe so
But they were hie and great also
And for to kepe out wel the sonne
The croppes were so thicke yronne
And euery braunche in other knytte
And ful of grene leues sytte
That sonne myght there none diserende
Lest the tender grasses shende
There myght men Roes and Roes yse
And of squirels ful great plente
From bowh to bowh alwaye leppynge
Conyes there were also playenge
That comen out of her clapers
Of sondry colonres and maners
And maden many a tournerynge
Upon the freshe grene sprynginge

In places thinne I parceyued there
In whiche there no trappes were
And sayde in shadowe most surety was
But I ne can thy nature se
Of serpents kynd that by bewyte
Myght hem bote come shrunken endyte
Of whiche the water is enuyron
Can make a verse ful lyenge
Thour the bankes of their welles
And by the floures out al elles
Sprange up the grasse,as thicke yere
And soft as any velwet
On which men myght his lemman ly
As on a fetherbed to plye
For the erthe was full faire and sweete
Thrugh moisture of the swell wete
Sprongen up the fayr gumme gras
As fayre,as thicke,as myster was
But mochel smelled it the place
That therby was of suche a grace
That it of floures hath plente
That bothen sowen and wyntre be
There sprange the violet al newe
And fresshe pervynke riche of hewe
And floures yelowe,white,and rede
Suche plente grewe there nowher in drede
Full gaye was al the ground aboute
And poudred,as men had it sprent
With many a fresshe and sondry floure
That casten up ful good fauoure
I wol not longe holde you in fable
Of al this garden delytable
I mote my tonge stynten nede
For I ne maye withouten drede
Naught reken you the beautee all
Ne halfe the bounte tho withall
I went on right hande and on lefte
Thour the plain,to wote vnlefte
Till I had al the garden sene
In the estres that men myght sene
And thus while I went in my playe
The god of love me folowed aye
Right as an hunter can abyde
The best,tyl he seeth his tyde
To shoten at goodly fro the bowe
Whan that him nedeth go no nowe
And so befyl,I rested me
Besydes a well under a tree
Which tree in Fraunce men call a pyne
But sithe the tyme of kynge Neptune
Ne grewe there tree in mannes syght
So fayre,ne so well woxe in hight
In al that yarde so high was noon

And

And springyng in a marble stone
Had nature set, the sothe to tell
Under that pyne tree a well
And on the border al without
Was writtен in the stone about
Letters final, that sayden thus
Here starfe the fayre Narcisus.
Narcisus was a bacheler
That loue had caught in his daungere
And in his nette gan him so straine
And dyd him so to wepe and playne
That nede him must his lyfe forgo
For a fayre lady that hight Echo
Him loued ouer any creature
And gan for him suche payne endure
That on a tyme she him tolde
That if he her louen nolde
That her behoued nedes dye
There lay none other remedye
But nathelesse for his beaute
Scornful and daungerous was he
That he nolde graunten her asking
For wepyng, ne for fayre prayeng
And whan she herde him werne her so
That she had in hert so great wo
And toke it in so great dispyte
That she without more respyte
Was dead anon: but ere she deyde
Ful pitously to god she preyde
That proude herted Narcisus
That was in loue so daungerous
Might on a day ben hampered so
For loue, and ben so hote for wo
That neuer he might to ioye attayne
That shulde he fele in euery payne
What sorowe trewe louers maken
That ben so vilaynously forsaken.

This prayer was but resonable
Therfore god helde it ferme and stable
For Narcisus shortly to tell
By auenture came to that well
To rest him in the shadowyng
A day, whan he come from huntyng
This Narcisus had suffred paynes
For rennyng al day in the playnes
And was for thurst in great distresse
Of herte, and of his weryneſſe
That had his brethe almost benomen
Whan he was to that wel ycomen
That shadowed was with braunches grene
He thought of thilke water shene
To drinke, and freshe him wele withall
And downe on knees he gan to fall
And forth his necke and heed outstraught
To drinke of that well a draught
And in the water anon was sene
His nose, his mouthe, his eyen shene
And he therof was all abashed
His owne shadowe had him betrasshed
For wel wende he the forme se
Of a chylde of great beaute
Well couth loue him wreke tho
Of daunger and of pryde also
That Narcisus countryne him bere
He quite him wel his guerdon there
For he mused so in the well
That shortely the sothe to tell
He loued his owne shadowe so
That at laste he starfe for wo
For whan he sawe that he his wyll
Might in no maner way fulfyll
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comforte naught
He lost his wytte, right in that place
And deyde within a lytel space
And thus his waryson he toke
For the lady that he forsoke
Ladyes I pray ensample taketh
Ye that ayenst your loue mistaketh
For if her dethe be pon to wyte
God can full wel your while quite.

Whan that this letter, of whiche I tel
Had taught me that it was the welle
Of Narcisus in his beaute
I gan anon withdrawe me
Whan it fel in my remembraunce
That him betyde such mischaunce
But at the laste than thought I
That scathelesse, ful sykerly
I myght vnto the welle go
Wherof shul I abashen so
Unto the welle than went I me
And downe I louted for to se
The clere water in the stone
And eke the grauel, whiche that shone
Downe in the botome, as syluer fyne
For of the welle, this is the fyne
In world is none so clere of hewe
The water is euer freshe and newe
That welneth vp, with wawes bright
The mountenaunce of two fynger hight
About it is grasse springyng
For moyste so thycke and wel lykyng
That it ne may in wynter dye

No more than may the fire be hyre.
DOun at the botome fer fawe I
Two cristall stones craftely
In thilke freshe and fayre well
But o thynge sothly dare I teil
That ye wolle holde a great mervayle
Or han it is tolde, withouten fayle
For whan the sonne clere in syght
Cast in that welle his bemes bright
And that the heere discended is
Than taketh the cristall stone ywis
Ageyne the sonne an hundred hewes
Blewe, yelowe, a reed that fresh & new is
Yet hath the mervaylous cristall
Suche strength, that the place over all
Both foule and tree, and leves grene
And all the verde in it is sene
And for to don you to understande
To make ensample wol I fonde
Right as a myrrour openly
Sheweth all thing that stondeth thereby
As well the colour, as the figure
Withouten any coverture
Right so the cristall stone shyning
Withouten any discevering
The entrees of the verde accuseth
To him that in the water museth
For ever in whiche halfe that ye be
Ye may wel halfe the gardyne se
And if he turne, he may right wele
Sene the remenaunt every dele
For there is none so lytel thyng
So hyd ne closed with shyttyng
That it ne is sene, as though it were
Peynted in the cristall there
This is the myrrour perilous
In whiche the proude Narcisus
Sey al his fayre face bright
That made him sith to lye upryght
For who so loke in that myrrour
There may nothyng ben his socour
That he ne shall there se somthyng
That shal him lede into laughyng
Ful many a worthy man hath it
Yblent, for folke of greatest wyt
Ben soone caught here and wayted
Withouten respyte ben they bayted
Here cometh to folke of newe rage
Here chaungeth many wight corage
Here lyth no rede ne wyte therto
For Venus sonne, dan Cupido
Hath sworn there of love the lede
That helpe me lythe there none, ne rede
So cercleth it the welle aboute
His gynnes hath he set withoute
Right for to catche in his panneres
These damoiseis and bacheleres
Love wyl none other wyse catche
Though he set eyther nette or latche
And for the lede that here was sworn
This welle is clepyd, as wel is knowen
The welle of Love, of very right
Of which there hath ful many wight
Spoken in bokes diversely
But they shul never so verily
Discripcion of the welle here
Ne the the sothe of this matere
As ye shul, whan I have bode
The crafte that her belongeth to.

ALl way me lyked for to dwell
To serve the cristall in the well
That shewed me ful openly
Thousande thinges fast by
But I may say in sory houre
Stode I to loken or to powre
For syther I sore syghed
That Myrrour hath me now entriked
But had I first knowen in my wyt
The vertue and strengthes of it
I nolde not have mused there
We had bette ben els where
For in the snare I fell anone
That had byrest shed many one
In thilke Myrrour sawe I tho
Amonge a thousande thynges mo
A rosier charged ful of rosis
That with an hedge aboute enclosis
Tho had I suche lust and envye
That for Paryse ne for Pavye
Nolde I have left to gone and se
There greatest heepe of roses be
When I was with this rage bente
That caught hath many a man a shrewte
Towarde the Roser gan I go
And when I was not ferre therfro
The savour of the roses swote
Me smote right to the herte rote
As I had all enbaumed me
And if I ne had endoured me
To have ben hard or assayled
My thankes wol I not have sayled
To pull a rose of al that route
To bere in myn honde aboute
And smellen to it where I went
But ever I dredde me to repent

And

And leste it greued or forthought
The lorde that thilke gardyn wrought
Of roses there were great wone
So fayre ware neuer in Rome
Knoppes close, stoute sawe I there
And some wel better wexen were
And some there ben of other morison
That drowe nygh to her season
And spedde hem faste for to sprede
I loue wel suche roses redde
For blode roses, and open also
Ben paled in a daye or two
But knoppes wyll freshe be
Two dayes at leest, or els thre
The knoppes greatly lyked me
For fayrer mayr there no man se
Who so my ght haue one of all
Trought hym ben ful lefe withall
Wight I gartonde of hem getten
For no rycheſſe I wolde it letten
Amonges the knoppes I chese one
So fayre, that of the remenaunt none
Me pleaſe I hatte so wel as it
When I auyſe in my wit
For it so wel was enlumyned
With colour reed, as well fyned
As nature couthe it make fayre
And it hath leaues well fourre payre
That kind hath set through his knowing
Aboute the redde roses springing
The stalke was as ryche ryght
And theron stode the knoppe vpryght
That it ne bowed vpon no syde
The swote smell sprange so wyde
That it dyed al the place aboute
When I had smelled the sauour swote
So wyll had I fro thence yet go
But sondele nere it went I tho
To take it, but myn honde for drede
Me durſte I to the Roſe bede
For thilkeles sharpe of many maners
Speres, thornes, and hoked briers
For muche they disconforted me
For sore I dradde to harmed be.

The god of Loue, with bowe bent
That al day set had hys talent
To purſue and to spyen me
Was stondyng by a fygge tree
And when he sawe howe that I
Had chosen so entencyfely
The bothum more vnto my pay
Than any other that I say
He toke an arowe, ful sharpely wheete
And in hys bowe when it was sette
He streyght vp to his eere drough
The stronge bowe, that was so tough
And shotte at me so wonder smerte
That through myneye vnto myn herte
The takel smote, and depe it wente
And therwith al suche colde me hente
That vnder clothes warme and softe
Sythen that day I haue chyuered ofte
Whan I was hurte thus in stounde
I fell downe plat vnto the grounde
Myn herte fayled, and faynted aye
And longe tyme in swoune I laye
But whan I came out of swounyng
And had wytte, and my felyng
I was al mate, and wende ful wele
Of blode haue lorne a full great dele
But certes the arowe that in me stoode
Of me ne drewe no droppe of blode
For why, I sonnde my woundes al drey
Than toke I with myn hondes twey
The arowe, and ful fast it out plight
And in the pullyng sore I syght
So at the last the shafte of tree
I drough out, with the fethers thre
But yet the hoked heed ywis
The whiche Beaute called is
Ran so depe in myn herte pace
That I it might not arace
But in myne herte styl it stoode
Al bledde I not a droppe of blode
I was bothe anguyshous and trouble
For the peryll that I sawe double
I nyst what to saye or do
Ne get a leche my woundes to
For neyther through graſſe ne rote
Ne had I helpe of hope ne bote
But to the bothum euer mo
Myn herte drewe, for all my wo
My thought was in none other thyng
For had it ben in my kepyng
It wolde haue brought my lyfe agayne
For certes euenly, I dare well sayne
The sight onely, and the sauoure
Alegged muche of my langoure
Than gan I for to drawe me
Towarde the Bothum fayre to se
And Loue had gette hym in his throwe
Another arowe in to his bowe
And for to shote gan hym dresse
The arowes name was Symplesse
And whan that Loue gan nygh me nere

He drowe it by boldenesse
And shote at me with all hys myght
So that this arowe anone ryght
Thyrughout eyen as it was sonde
In to myn herte hath made a wounde
Than I anone dyd all my crafte
For to drawen out the shafte
And therwithall I syghed ofte
But in myn herte the heed was lefte
Whiche aye encreased my desyre
Unto the bothum drowe I nere
And euermo that me was wo
The more desyre had I to go
Unto the Roser, where that grewe
The fayre bothum, so bright of hewe
Better me were to haue letten be
But it behoued nede me
To don right as myn herte badde
For euer the body muste be ladde
After the herte, in wele and wo
Of force togyther they must go
But neuer this archer wolde fyne
To shote at me with al hys pyne
And for to make me to him mete
The thirde arowe he gan to shete
Whan best hys tyme he might espye
The whiche was named Curtesye
In to myn herte he dyd anone
I swoune I fell, bothe deed and pale
Longe tyme I lay, and syzed nought
Tyl I abrayed out of my thought
And faste than I anyred me
To drawe out the shafte of tree
But euer the heed was lefte behynde
For ought I couthe pull or wynde
So fore it stycked whan I was hytte
That by no crafte I myght it flytte
But anguyshous and ful of thought
I felte such wo, my wound aye wrought
That somoned me alway to go
Towarde the Rose, that pleased me so
But I ne durst in no manere
Byeause the archer was so nere
For euermore gladly as I rede
Bryent chylde of fyre hath muche drede
And certes yet for all my peyne
Though that I sygh, yet arowes reyne
And grounde quarelles, sharpe of steele
Ne for no payne that I myght feele
Yet myght I not my selfe withholde
The fayre Roser to beholde
For Loue me yaue suche hardyment
For to fulfyll his commaundement
Upon my feete I rose by than
Fayre, as a forwoumbed man
And forthe to goo myght I fette
And for the archer nolde I lette
Towarde the Roser fulle I drowe
But thornes sharpe, mo than nowe
There were, and also thyckets thycke
And bryers brimme for to pricke
That I ne myght geete grace
The rough thornes for to pace
To sene the Roses freshe of hewe
I must abyde, though it me rewe
The hedge aboute so thycke was
That closed the Roses in compas
But o thyng lyked me right wele
I was so nygh, I myght feele
Of the bothum the swote odoure
And also se the freshe colours
And that right greatly lyked me
That I so nere myght it se
Suche ioye anon therof had I
That I forgate my malady
To sene I had suche bryre
Of sorowe and anger I was al quite
And of my woundes that I had thore
For nothyng tyken me might more
Than dwellen by the Roser aye
And theuer neuer to passe awaye
But whan a whyle I had be thare
The god of Loue, whiche al to share
Myn herte with his arowes kene
Casteth hym to yeue me woundes grene
He shote at me full hastely
In arowe named Company
The whiche tabell is full able
To make theste ladyes mercyable
Than I anone gan chaungen hewe
For greuaunce of my woonde newe
That I agayne fell in swouning
And syghed sore in complayning
Sore I complayned that my sore
On me gan greuen more and more
I had none hope of allegyaunce
So nigh I drowe to dysperaunce
I rought of dethe, ne of life
Whether that loue wolde me dryfe
Yf me a martir wolde he make
I might his power not forsake
And whyle for anger thus I woke
The god of Loue an arowe toke
Ful sharpe it was and pugnaunt
And it was called Fayre semblaunt
The whiche in wyse wolde consent

That

That any louer hym repente
To serue hys loue, with hert and all
For any perell that may befall
But though this arowe were keene grounde
As any rasour that is founde
To cutte and herue as the poynte
The god of Loue it had anoynt
With a precious oynement
Some del to yeue alegrement
Upon the woundes that he hadde
Thought the body in my herte made
To helpe her sores, and to cure
And that they may the better endure
But yet this arowe, without more
Sate in myn hert a large sore
That in ful great payne I abode
But ay the oynement wente abrode
Throughout my woundes large & wyde
It spredde about in euery syde
Through whose vertue, and whose might
Myn hert ioyfull was and lyght
I had ben dred and all to shente
But for the precious oynemente
The shafte I drowe out of the arowe
Nokyng for wo ryght wonder narowe
But the herde, whiche made me smerte
Lefte behynde in myn herte
With other sowre, I dare well say
That neuer wolde be take away
But the oynement halpe me wele
And yet suche sorowe dyd I fele
That all day I chaunged hewe
Of my wounded freshe and newe
As men might se in my visage
The arowes were so full of rage
So barynous of bytternesse
That men thereof myght se
Bothe great anoye, and the swetnesse
And sore meynt with bytternesse (wood
Nowe wepe they sely, nowe were they
In dem I fele bothe harme and good
Nowe sore without aleggement
Nowe softyng, with oynement
It softened hert, and pyched thorgh
Thus vaste and anger togyther werre.

The god of Loue beholdyng
Come lepande to me hastely
And sayde to me in great iape
Yelde the, for thou may not escape
May no defence auayle the here
Therefore I rede make no daungere
Yf thou wolte yelde the hastely
Thou shalte rather haue mercy
Ye is a foole in sothernesse
That with daunger or shamefastnesse
Rebelleth, there that he shoulde plese
In suche folye is lytell ese
Be meke, where thou must nedes bowe
To stryue ayen is nought thy prowe
Come aboues, and haue ydo
For I wol that it be so
Than yelde the here debonairly
And I answered ful humbly
Gladly syr, at your byddyng
I wol me yelde in all thyng
To your seruyce I will me take
For god defende that I shulde make
Ayen your byddyng resistence
I wol not don so great offence
For if I dyd, it were no skyll
Ye may do with me what ye wyll
Saue or spyll, and also slo
Fro you in no wyse may I go
My lyfe, my dethe, is in your honde
I may not laste out of your honde
Playne at your lyste I yelde me
Hopyng in hert, that sometyme ye
Comforte and ese shul me sende
Or els shortly, this is the ende
Withouten helthe, I mote aye dure
But if ye take me to your cure
Comforte or helth, howe shulde I haue
Sythe ye me hurte, but ye me saue
The helthe of Loue mote be founde
Where as they token first her wounde
And yf ye lyste of me to make
Your prisoner, I woll it take
Of hert and will fully at gre
Holy and playne I yelde me
Without feynyng or feruentyse
To be gouerned by your empryse
Of you I here so muche prise
I wol ben hole at your deuyse
For to fulfyll your lykyng
And repent for nothyng
Hopyng to haue yet in some tyde
Mercy, of that I abyde
And with that couenaunt yelde I me
Anon downe kneling vpon my kne
Proferyng for to kysse his fete
But for nothyng he wolde me lete.

And sayd, I loue the bothe and preise
Sens that thyn answere both me ese
For thou answered so curtesly

For

For nowe I wote wel herrely
That thou art gentle by thy speche
For though a man ferre walle seche
He shulde not fynden in certayne
No suche answere of no vilayne
For suche a wordes myght noughe
Issue out of a vilaynes thoughte
Thou shalt not ysen of thy speche
For thy helpynge woll I eche
And eke encresen that I maye
But first I wol that thou obaye
Fully for thyn auauntage
Anone to do me here homage
And sythe kysse thou shalte my mouthe
Whiche to no vilayne was neuer couthe
For to aproche it, ne for to touche
For saufe of cherles I ne touche
That they shal neuer neigh it nere
For curteys, and of fayre manere
Wel taught, and ful of gentelnesse
He must ben, that shall me kysse
And also of ful highe fraunchyse
That shal atteyne to that empryse
And first of o thyng warne I the
That payne and great aduersyte
He mote endure, and eke trauayle
That shal me serue, without fayle
But there agaynste the to comforte
And with thy seruyce to disporte
Thou maist ful glade and ioyfull be
So good a mayster to haue as me
And lorde of so high renoun
I heare of loue the Gentenoun
Of Curtesye the baneres
For I am of self the maneres
Gentyll, curteys, meke, and free
That who euer ententife be
Me to honour, doure, and serue
And also that he hym obserue
Fro trespace and fro vylanye
And hym gouerne in curtesye
With wyl and with entencyon
For when he first in my prison
Is caught, than must he beterly
Fro thence forthe ful besyly
Caste hym gentyl for to be
Yf he desire helpe of me
Anone without more delaye
Without daunger or affraye
I become his man anone
And gane hym thankes many a one
And sweled homage with hondes ioynt
And made it in my poyte full queynt
The ioye went to my herte rote
Whan I had kyssed hys mouth so swote
I had suche myrthe and suche lykyng
He cured me of langurlykyng
He asked of me thou hollages
I haue he sayde taken fele homages
Of one and other, where I haue ben
Disseyued ofte, with ouen wene
These felons ful of falsyte
Haue many sythes begyled me
And through her falsheed her lust achyeue
Wherof I repent, and am agreued
And I hem gette in my daungere
Her falsheed shal they bye ful dere
But for I loue the, I say the playne
I wold of the be more certayne
For the ioye I woll nowe bynde
That thou away ne shalt not wynde
For to denyen thy conenaunt
Or done that is not auenaunt
That thou were false, it were great rud
Sythe thou semest so ful of trouth
Sir, if the lyste to vnderstande
I merueyle the askyng this demande
For why or wherfore shulde ye
Hollages or borowes aske of me
Or any other sykernesse
Sythe ye wote in sothfastnesse
That ye me haue suspysed so
And ole myn herte taken me fro
That it wol do for me nothyng
But if it be at your byddyng
Myn hert is yours, myn right nought
Is it bedouted, in dede and thought
Redy in all to worche your wyll
Whether so turne to good or yll
So sore it inflameth you to plese
No man therof may you disese
Ye haue theron sette suche lustyne
That it is weuered in many wyse
And yf ye doone it nolde obey
Ye maye therof do make a key
And holde it with you for hollage
Nolde neuer this none outrage
(Quod Loue) and fully I assoyde
For of the body he is ful lorde
That hath the herte in his eeruyse
Outrage is were to alden more.

THan of hys armeure he drough
A tyrel key fetysh enough
Whiche was of golde polyshed clere
And sayde to me, with this key here

Thou

Thyne hert to me no we wol I shette
For al my ioyful loke and knette
I hyde vnder this lyerl key
That no wight may cary awey
This key is full of great poste
With whiche anone he touched me
Under the syde ful softely
That he myn hert sodaynly
Without any hadde speered
That yet ryght nought it hath me deered
Whan he had done hys wyl al out
And I had put hym out of dout
Sir I sayde: I haue ryght great wyl
Your iuste and pleasure to fulfyl
Loke ye my seruyce take at gree
By thilke fayth ye owe to me
I saye nought for recreaundyse
For I nought dout of your seruyce
But the seruaunt trauayleth in vayne
That for to serue dothe hys payne
Unto that lorde, whiche in no wyse
Conne hym no thanke for his seruyce.

QUe sayde, dismay the nought
Sith ꝑ for socour hast me sought
In thãk thy seruice wol I take
And highe of degree I wol the
Yf wickednesse ne hynder the (make
But (as I hope) it shal nought be
To wurthyp no wight by auent.
Nay come, but he payne endure
Abyde and suffer thy distresse
That hurteth nowe, it shal be lesse
I wote my scrife what may the saue
What medicine thou wouldest haue
And if thy trueth to me thou kepe
I shal vnto thyne helpyng eke
To cure thy woundes ꝙ make hem clene
Where so they be olde or grene
Thou shalt be holpen at wordes fewe
For certayuly thou shalt wel shewe
Where that thou seruest with good wyll
For to accomplyshen and fulfyll
My cõmaundementes day and night
Whiche I to louers yeue of right.

AY sir, for goddes loue (sayde I)
Er ye passe hens ententyfely
Your cõmaũdemẽts to me ye sai
And I shal kepe hem if I may
For hem to kepen is al my thought
And if so be I wote hem nought
Than may I bewityngly
Wherfore I pray you entierly
With al myne hert, me to lere
That I trespace in no manere
The god of loue than charged me
Anon, as ye shal here and se
Worde by worde, by right empryse
So as the Romaunt shall deuyse
The maister leseth his tyme to lere
Whan the disciple wol not here
It is but payne on hym to swynke
That on hys lernyng wol not thynke
Who so lust loue, lerne hym entende
For now ꝑ Romance begynneth to amẽde
Nowe is good to here in fay
Yf any be that canne it say
And poynt it as the reson is
Sette for other gare ywys
It shal nat wel in al thyng
Be brought to good vnderstondyng
For a reder that poynteth yl
A good sentence may ofte spyl
The boke is good at the endyng
Made of newe and lusty thyng
For who so wol the endyng here
The crafte of loue he shall nowe lere
Yf that he wol so longe abyde
Tyl I this Romance may vnhyde
And vndo the signifiaunce
Of this dreme in to Romaunce
The sothfastnesse that nowe is hydde
Without couerture shal be kydde
Whan I vndone haue this dreming
Wherin no worde is of leasing.

VYllany at the begynnyng
I wol say loue ouer al thyng
Thou leaue, if thou wolte be
False, and trespace ayenst me
I curse and blame generally
Al hem that louen villany
For vyllany maketh villayne
And by hys dedes a chorle is seyne
These vyllayns arne without pyte
Frendshyp, loue, and al bounte
I nyl receyue vnto my seruyce
Hem that ben vylayns of empryse
But vnderstonde in thyn entent
That this is not myn entendement
To clepe no wight in no ages
Onely gentel for hys lynages
But who so is vertuous
And in his porte not outrageous
Whan surhe one thou seest the befome

Though

Though he be not gentyll borne
Thou mayst wel seyne this is in sothe
That he is gentyll, because he bothe
Is longeth to a gentyll man
Of hem none other deme I can
For certaynly withouten drede
A chorle is demed by his dede
Of lyre or lowe, as ye may se
Or of what kynred that he be
Ne say nought for none yuel wyll
Thyng that is to holden styll
It is no worshyp to mysley
Thou maist ensample take of key
That was sometyme for mysseyeng
Hated bothe of olde and yonge
As ferre as Gaweyn the worthye
Was praysed for hys curtesye
Kay was hated, for he was fell
Of worde dispitous and cruell
Wherfore be wyse and aqueyntable
Goodly of worde, and resonable
Bothe to lesse and eke to mare
And whan thou comest there men are
Loke that thou haue in custome aye
First to salue hem if thou maye
And if it fal that of hem somme
Salue the first, be not domme
But quite hym curtesly anon
Without abyding, er they gon
For nothyng eke thy tonge applye
To speke wordes of rybaudrye
To vilayne speche, in no degre
Late neuer thy lyppe vnbounden be
For I nought holde him in good fayth
Curtrys that foule wordes sayth
And al women serue and preyse
And to thy power her honour reyse
And if that any misseyere
Dispyse women, that thou mayst here
Blame him, and bidde him holde him styl
And sette thy might, and all thy wyll
Women and ladyes for to plese
And to do thyng that may hem ese
That they euer speke good of the
For so thou maist best praysed be
Loke fro pryde thou kepe the wele
For thou maiste bothe perseyue and fele
That pryde is bothe foly and sinne
And he that pryde hath hym withinne
Ne may his hert in no wyse
Weken ne soupten to seruyce
For pryde is founde in euery parte
Contrarye vnto Loues arte
And he that loueth trewely
Shulde hym conteyne ioyfly
Without pryde in soothe wise
And him disguysen in queyntise
For queynte aray, without drede
Is nothyng pyonde, who taketh hede
For freshe aray, as men may se
Without pryde may ofte be
Mayntayne thy selfe after thy rent
Of robe and eke of garment
For many fythe fayre clothyng
A man amenderth in muche thyng
And loke alway that they be shape
What garment that thou shalt make
Of hym that can best do
With al that parteyneth therto
Poynts and sleues be wel sittande
Right and streyght on the hande
Of shone and bootes, newe and fayre
Loke ye the lest thou haue a payre
And that they syte so seruysably
That these rude may vtterly
Wenaysle, syth that they syte so playne
Howe they come an or of agayne
Weare streyght gloues with aumere
Of sylke, and alway with good chere
Thou yeue, if thou haue ryches
And if thou haue nought spende the lesse
Alway be mery, if thou may
But wast not thy good alway
Haue hatte of floures freshe as May
Chaplet of Roses of whitsonday
For suche aray ne coshteth but lyte
Thyn hodes washe, thy tethe make white
And lette no fylthe vpon the be
Thy nayles blacke, if thou mayst se
Cloyde it away delyuerly
And kembe thyne herd right ioyfly
Farre not thy vysage in no wise
For that of loue is nat thempryse
For loue bothe harm, as I fynde
A beaute that cometh nat of kynde
Alway in hert I rede the
Gladde and mery for to be
And be as ioyfull as thou canne
Loue hath no ioye of sorowful manne
That yuel is ful of curtesye
That knoweth in his maladye
For euer of loue the sickenesse
Is meynt with swete and bitternesse
The sore of loue is meruaylous
For nowe the louer is ioyous
Nowe can he playne, nowe can he grone

Nowe

How maist thyngis to maken mone
To hym the playneth for hevynesse
To mo/ow he playneth for lothfulnesse
The lyfe of lesse is ful contrarye
Which dombemeth and ofte barye
But if thou canst myrthes make
Thy men to gee wol gladly take
Do it goodly, I commaunde the
For men shulde where so ever they be
Do thing that hem lyketh is
For therof cometh good loos and pris
Herof that thou be vertuous
Se be not straungere ne daungerous
For if that thou good ryder be
Prike gladly that men may se
In armes also if thou conne
Purchase ryl thou a namehath wonne
And if thy boyer be fayre and clere
Thou shalt maken no great daungere
Whan to synge they goodly pray
It is thy worshyp for to obey
Also to you it longeth aye
To harpe and gyterne, daunce and playe
For if he can wel lete and daunce
It may him greatly do avaunce
Among the for thy lady sake
Songes and cõplayntes that thou make
For that wol menen in her herte
Whan they reden of thy smarte
Loke that no man for scarce the bridle
In that may greve the manyfolde
Reson wol that a lover be
In this pleyes more large and fre
Than chorles that ben not of louyng
For who therof can any thyng
He shal be lefe aye for to preue
In londes fore who so wolde leue
For he that through a sodayne syght
Or for a dyssyng anon ryght
Yaue hole his hert, in wyl and thought
And to hym selfe reserth right nought
After this ensyngle, it is good reson
He yeue his good in abandon.

NOw wol I shortly here reherse
Of that I have sayd in verse
Al the sentence by and by
In wordes fewe compendously
That thou the better mayst on hem thinke
Whether so it be thou wake or wynke
For the wordes lytel greve
I man to kepe, whan it is breve
Who so with Loue wol gon or ryde
He mote be curteys, and boyde of pryde
Mery, and ful of folyye
And of Largesse a lofed be.

First I sayne the here in penaunce
That euer wit hout repentaunce
Thou set thy thought in thy louyng
To last without repentyng
And thinke hyon thy myrthes swete
That shal folow after whan ye mete.

And for thou art new to Loue shalt be
I wyl, and commaunde the
That in one place thou set al hole
Thine hert, without halfen dole
For trechery and falsenesse
For I loued neuer doubleneesse
To many hys herte that wol departe
Euerych shal haue but lytel parte
But of him dyrde I me right nought
That in one place setteth his thought
Therfore in o place it sette
And let it neuer thens flette
For if thou yeuest it in lesyng
I holde it but wrecched thyng
Therfore yeue it whole and quite
And thou shalt haue the more merytte
If it be lent, than after soone
The bounte and the thanke is done
But in Loue, fre yeuen thyng
Requireth a great guerdonyng
Yeue it in perfe all quite fully
And make thy gyfte debonairly
For men that perfe holde more dere
That yeuen is with gladsome chere
That gifte nought to prayse is
That man yeueth maugre his
Whan thou hast yeuen thyne hert (as I
Have sayd) the here openly
Than auentures shul the fall
Whiche harde and heuy ben with all
For ofte whan thou berhynkest the
Of thy louyng, where so thou be
Fro folke thou must departe in hye
That none perceyue thy maladye
But hyde thyne harme thou must alone
And go forth sole, I make thy mone
Thou shalt no while be in o state
But whylom colde and whylom hate
Now red as Rose, now pelowe s fade
Such sorow I trow thou neuer hade
Cotidien, ne quartayne
It is not so full of peyne

For often tymes it shal fal
In loue, among thy peynes al
That thou thy selfe al holly
Forgetest shalt so vtterly
That many tymes thou shalt be
Styl as an ymage of tree
Domme as a stone, without stering
Of foote or honde, without spekyng.
Than sone after al thy peyne
To memorye shalt thou come agayne
A man abashed wonder sore
And after sygher more and more
For wyt thou wele without ern were
In suche astate ful ofte haue bene
That haue the yerl of loue astryde
Wherthrough thou art so dismayde.

After a thought shal take the so
That thy loue is to ferre the fro
Thou shalt say (god) what may this be
That I ne may my lady se
Myne herte alone is to her go
And I abyde al sole in wo
Departed fro myne owne thought
And with myne eyen se ryght nought
Alas myne eyen fene I ne may
My carefull herte to conuay
Myne hertes guyde, but they be
I prayse nothyng what euer they se
Shul they abyde than, say
But gone and wyllen without delay
That myne herte desyreth so
For certainly, but if they go
I foole my selfe I may well holde
Whan I ne se what myne herte wolde
Wherfore I wol gone her to sene
Or eased shal I neuer bene
But I haue some tokenyng
Than goth thou forth without dwelling
But ofte thou sayest of thy desyre
Er thou mayst come her any nere
And wastest in bayne thy passage
Than faylest thou in a newe rage
For want of syght, thou grouest mayne
And homwarde pensife thou hom returne
In great mischefe than shalt thou be
For than agayne shal come to the
Sighes and playntes with newe wo
That no techyng pricketh so
Who wote it nought, he may go lere
Of hem that byen loue so dere
No thyng thyne herte appesen mayst
That ofte thou wolt gone and assayst
If thou mayst fene by auenture
Thy lyues loye, thyne hertes cure
So that by grace, if thou myghte
Atteyne of her to haue a syghte
Than shalt thou done more other dede
But with that syght thyne eyen fede
That sappe freshe whan thou mayst se
Thyne herte shal so sauyfyed be
That neuer thou wolderst thy chaunce ren
Ne remoue, for to se that swete
The more thou seest in sothfastnesse
The more thou couyerst of that swetnesse
The more thyne herte brenneth in fire
The more thyne herte to in desyre
For who coueyteth euery dele
It may be lykened wonder wele
The payne of loue beeth a fere
For euermore thou nyghest nere
Thought, or who so that it be
For very sothe I tel it the
The hotter euer shal thou brenne
As experience shall the kenne
Where so comest in any coste
Who is next hyre he brenneth moste
And yet forsothe for al thyne here
Though thou for loue swelte and swete
Ne for no thyng thou frien may
Thou shalt not wylles to passe away
And though thou go, yet must the nede
Thinke al day on her hayre hede
Whom thou beheldest with so good wyll
And holde thy selfe beyyed yll
That thou ne haddest more hardyment
To shewe her aught of thyne entent
Thyn herte fal for thou wolt despise
And eke reproue of cowardyse
That thou so dull in euery tyyng
Were dome for euer, without spekyng
Thou shalte eke thynke þ dyddest folye
That thou were her so fast bye
And durste not aduenture the to say
Some thyng, er thou came away
For thou haddest no more wonne
To speke of her whan thou be gonne
But yet she wolde for thy sake
In armes goodly the haue take
It shulde haue be more worthe to the
Than of tresour great plente
Thus shalt þ more and eke coplayne
And get vncheson to gon agayne
Vnto thy wonne, or to thy place
Where thou beheldest her fleshly face
And neuer for fals suspection

Thou

Thou woldeſt fynde occaſyon
For to gone vnto her houſe
So art thou than deſyrouſe
I ſyght of her for to haue
If thou thyn honour myghteſt ſaue
Or any erande mighteſt make
Thyder, for thy loues ſake
Ful fayne thou woldeſt, but for drede
Thou goeſt not, leſt that men take hede
Wherfore I rede in thy goynge
And alſo in thyne agayne commynge
Thou be wel ware that men ne wyt
Fryne the other cauſe than it
To go that waye, or faſte bye
To beale wel is no folye
And if ſo be it happe the
That thou thy loue there mayſte ſe
In ſyker wyſe thou her ſalewe
Wherwith thy colour wol tranſmewe
And eke thy blod ſhal al to quake
Thy hewe eke chaungen for her ſake
But worde and wyt, with chere ful pale
Shul want for to tell thy tale
And if thou mayſt ſo ferforth wynne
That thou Reaſon durſt begynne
And woldeſt fayne thre thynges or mo
Thou ſhalt ful ſcarſly fayne the two
Though thou bethynke the neuer ſo wele
Thou ſhalt forgete yet ſomedele.

But yf thou deale with chery
For falſe louers mowe all foly
Shain what hē luſt whonē dred
They be ſo double in her falſhed
For they in hert can thynke o thynge
And fayne another in her ſpekyng
And whan thy ſpeche is ended all
Right thus to the it ſhal be fall
If any worde than come to mynde
That thou to ſay haſt left behynde
Than thou ſhalt brenne in great martyre
For thou ſhalt brenne as any fyre
This is the ſtryfe and eke the affraye
And the batell that laſteth aye
This bargayne ende may neuer take
But if that ſhe thy peace wyl make
And whan the nyght is comen anon
A thouſande angres ſhal come vpon
To bed as faſt thou wolte the dyght
Where thou ſhalt haue but ſmal delyght
For whan thou weneſt for to ſlepe
So ful of payne ſhalt thou crepe
Sterte in thy bed aboute ful wyde
And turne ful ofte on euery ſyde
Now downward groffe, & nowe vpright
And walow in wo the longe nyght
Thyne armes ſhalt þ ſprede a brede
As man in werre were forwerede
Than ſhal the come a remembraunce
Of her ſhape and her ſemblaunce
Wherto none other may be pere
And were thou wel without were
That the ſhal ſe ſomeyme that nyght
That thou haſt her, that is ſo bryght
Naked betwene thyne armes there
Al ſothfaſtneſſe as though it were
Thou ſhalt make caſtels thā in Spayne
And dreme of ioy, al but in bayne
And the delyten of ryght nought
Whyle thou ſo ſtombreſt in that thought
That is ſo ſwete and delytable
The which in ſothe nys but a fable
For it ne ſhal no whyle laſt
Than ſhalt thou ſyghe and wepe faſt
And ſay dere god, what thing is this
My dreme is turned al amys
Which was ful ſwete and apparent
But nowe I wake it is al ſhent
Nowe yede this mery thought away
Twenty tymes vpon a day
I wolde this thought wold come agayne
For it alegeth wel my payne
It maketh me ful of ioyful thought
It ſleeth me that it laſteth nought
Ih lorde, why nyl ye me ſocoure
The ioye I trowe that I langoure
The deth I wold me ſhuld ſlo
Whyle I lye in her armes two
Myn harme is harde withouten were
My great vnreſt ful ofte I mene.

But wold Loue do ſo I myght
Haue fully ioye of her ſo bryght
My payne were quyte me rychely
Alas to great a thyng aſke I
It is but foly, and wrong wenyng
To aſke ſo outragious a thyng
And who ſo aſketh foſyly
He mote be warned haſtely
And I ne wote what I may ſay
I am ſo ferre out of the way
For I wold haue ful great lykyng
And ful great ioy of laſſe thyng
For wold ſhe of her gentyneſſe
Withouten more, me ones keſſe
It were to me a great guerdon
Releſe of all my paſſyon
But it is harde to come therto
Al is but foly that I do
So hyghe I haue myne herte ſette

Where I may no comfoyte gette
I wote not where I fay wel or nought
But this I wote wel in my thought
That it were bette of her alone
For to flynte my wo and mone
I lobe on her I caft goodly
That for to haue al vtterly
Of an other al hole the play
Ih lorde where I fhal bybe the day
That euer fhe fhall my lady be
Pe is ful cured, that may her fe
A god, whan fhal the dawnyng fpryng
To leggen thus is an angry thyng
I haue no ioy thus here to lye
Whan that my loue is not me bye
A man to lyen hath great diftrefe
Which may not flepe, ne reft in efe
I wolde it dawed, and were now day
And that the nyght were went away
For were it day, I wolde vp ryfe
Ah flowe fonne, fherwe thyne empryfe
Spede the to fpryde thy bernes bright
And chace the derkneffe of the nyght
To put away the ftoundes ftronge
Which in me laften al to longe
The nyght fhale thou continue fo
Without reft, in payne and wo
If euer thou knewe of loue diftreffe
Thou fhall nowe lerne in that ficknefle
And thus enburyng fhalt thou lye
And ryfe on morowe vp crip
Out of thy bed, and harneys the
Er euer dawnyng thou mayft fe
Al priuely than fhalt thou gone
Whare whyder it be thy felfe alone
For reyne, or hayle, for fnowe, for flete
Thyder fhe dwellerh, that is fo fwete
The which may fall a flepe be
And thynketh but lytel vpon the
Than fhalt thou go, ful foule aferde
Loke if the gate be vnfperde
And wayte without in wo and payne
Ful yuel a colde in wynde and rayne
Than fhalt thou go the boze before
If thou mayfte fynde any fhoze
Or hole, or refte, what euer it were
Than fhalt thou ftoupe, and lay to eere
If they within a flepe be
I mene al faue thy lady free
Whom wakyng if thou mayft afpye
Go put thy felfe in iupardye
To afke grace, and the bynerne
That fhe may were without werne
That thou wyght no reft haft had
So fore for her thou were beftad
Women wel ought pyte to take
Of hem that forowen for her fake
And loke for loue of that reiyfe
That thou thynke none other lyfe
For whan thou haft fo great anuey
Shall byfle the er thou go awey
And hold that in ful great beyne
And for that no man fhall the fe
Before the houfe, ne in the way
Loke thou be gon againe er day
Suche comming, and fuche going
Suche beynneffe, and fuch walking
Maketh louers withouten any werne
Under her clothes pale and lerne
For Loue leueth colour ne clerneffe
Who loueth ferne hath no fatneffe
Thou fhalt wel by thy frife fe
That thou muft nedes affayed be
For men that fhape hem other way
Falfely her ladyes for to betray
It is no wonder though they be fatte
With falfe othes her loues they gatte
For ofte I fe fuche lofengroures
Fatter than Bbottes or priours.
Yet wich o thing I the charge
That is to fay, that thou be large
Vnto the mayde, that her doth ferne
So beft her thanke thou fhalte deferne
Yeue her gyftes, and get her grace
For fo thou may thanke purchace
That fhe the worthy bolde and fre
Thy lady, and al that may the fe
Alfo her feruauntes worfhyp aye
And pleafe as moche as thou maye
Great good through hem may come to the
Byeaufe with her they ben prime
They fhal her tel how they the fonde
Curreys and wyfe, and wel boarde
And fhe fhal preyfe wel the more
Loke out of londe thou be not fore
And if fuche cauſe thou haue, that the
Behoueth to gone out of countre
Leaue hole thyn hert in hoftage
Tyl thou againe make thy paſſage
Thynke longe to fe the fwete thing
That hath thine hert in her keping
Now haue I tolde the, in what wyfe
A louer fhal do me ſeruice
Do it than, if thou wolt haue
The mede, that thou after craue.

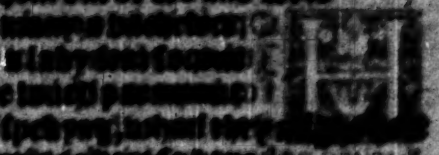
Whan

Whan I owe al this hed bodename
I said him, sir how may it be (ne
That louers may in such manere
Endure? for many haue said here
I marvayle us wonder sore
How any man may lyue or fare
In suche payne, and surde byrnyng
In sorowe & thought, & suche sykyng
Ye darke nyght wo to make
Whether so it be day or wake
In suche anoy contynuelly
As helpe me god this marvayle I
Howe man, but he were made of stele
Myght lyue a mouthe, such paynes to fele.

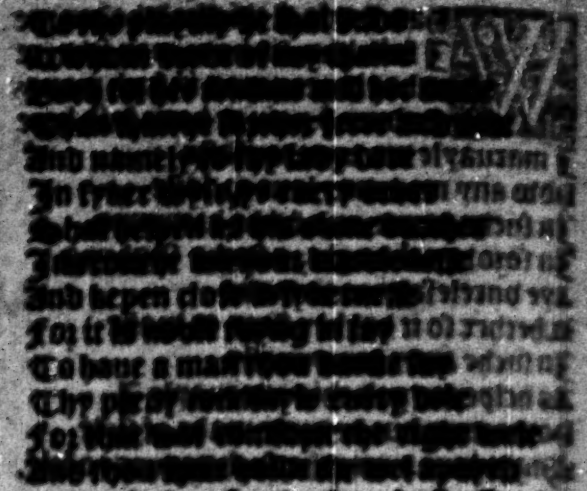
The god of loue than said me
Frende, by the fayth I owe to the
May no man haue good, but he it bye
A man loueth more tenderlye
The thyng, that he hath bought most dere
For were thou wel without more
In thanke that thyng is taken more
For which a man hath suffred sore
Certes no two ne may attayne
Unto the sore of loues payne
Ne yuel therto ne may amounte
No more than a man counte
The droppes that of the water be
For drie as wel the great see
Thou myghtest, as the harines tell
Of hem that with Loue dwell
In seruice, for peyne hem sleeth
And that eche wold fle the deth
And trowe they shulde never escape
Ne that hope coueth hem make
Glad as man in prison sete
And may not gette for to ete
But barlye bread, and water pure
And lyeth in vermyn and in ordure
With al this yet canne he lyue
Good hope suche comforte hath him yeue
Whiche maketh wene that he shal be
Delyuered and come to lyberte
In fortune is full trust
Though he lye in strawe or dust
In hope is al his sustayning
And so for louers in her wenyng
Whiche loue hath shytte in his prisoun
Good hope, is her salvacioun
Good hope (how sore that they smerte)
Yeueth hem both wyl and herte
To prefer her body to martyre
For hope so sore doth hem desyre
To suffre eche harme that men deuyse
For ioye that afterwarde shal aryse

Hope in desyre eache victory
In hope of loue is al the glory
For hope is al þ loue maye yeue
Were hope, there shuld no lenger
Dwelle of hope, which wil desyre (lyue
Inamoured louers in suche manyre
Good hope is curteyse for to please
To kepe louers from al disease
Hope hopeth his londe, and wol abyde
For any peryl that may betyde
For hope to louers, as most chiefe
Doth hem endure al myscheefe
Hope is her helpe whan myster is
And I shal yeue the eke ywis
Thre other thynges, that great solace
Doth to hem that be in my lace
The first good that may be founde
To hem that in my lace be bounde
Is Swete thought, for to recorde
Thyng wherwith thou canst accorde
Best in thine herte, where ther be
Thynkyng in absence is good to the
Whan any louer doth complayne
And lyueth in distresse, and in payne
Than Swete thought shal come as blyue
Awaye his angre for to dryue
It maketh louers to haue remembraunce
Of comforte, and of highe pleasaunce
That Hope hath hight him for to wynne
For thought anone than shal begynne
As frere god wot, as he can fynde
To make a myrrour of his mynde
For to beholde he wol not let
Her person he shal afore him set
Her laughyng eyen persaunt and clere
Her shape, her forme, her goodly chere
Her mouthe, that is so gracious
So swete, and eke so saverous
Of al her feyters he shal take hede
His eyen with al her lymmes fede.
Thus Swete thynkyng shall aswage
The payne of louers, and her rage
Thy ioye shal double without gesse
Whan thou thynkest on her semelynesse
Or of her laughyng, or of her chere
That to the made thy lady dere
This comforte wol I that thou take
And if the nexte thou wolte forsake
Which is not lesse saverous
Thou shuldest not ben to daungerous

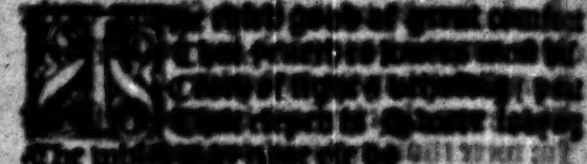
To bring hem out of wo and woxke



Of her lowerly seruen to hem
To me & povverty al her tyme
The whiche is stored in myne
In hert it maketh hem glad and lyghte
Spreche what they wole in any wyse
And therfore nam I nought to envye
In olde bokes as I fynde
That clerkes wryten from hem
There was a lady ferre out fro
Whiche of her lowenesse toke
On him for to be membre amonge
In which he sayd, as I gesse
Spekers of him that is to blame
To mete povverly al thinges
Iwys he spereth to sore myne
To spekē of him at eny of myne
It eateth me of al my solace
To meten nakid by the pleasaunce
As of his person hardy & nice
Whe wyst ful litel what Pygmalion
Compaseth in ful mochē thyng
Her love the had full well assayed
Of him the was ful lief apayed
To spekē of him her love was fre
Therfore I rede thy hert hom gre
A felowe that can wel counsele
And kepe thy counsayle, and wel hele
To whom go thyne holly thyne thoughtes
Both wel and bin, frē and stidfast
To get comforte to him than go
And priuely opē vnto him two
Ye shal spekē of that goodly thyng
That hath thyne hert in her kepyng
Of her beautee and her fayrenesse
And of her goodly countenaunce
Of al thy sore, than shalt him fay
And after him sorowfully howe thou may
Do any thyng that may her plese
For it to the that do great ese
Thus he may were thy trouth bifore
Both of thy wele and al thy wo
And if his hert to love be feare
His companye is moche the bette
For Reson wol the ever to the
In litterly his pleasure
And what herte he lovery so



whan suche a frende thou hast assayed.



Foz to allwoge a mannes sorowe
To frende his lady by the morowe
Foz it is a ful noble thyng
Whan frendes meten at nede
Wherof they be ful besy bysy
But al my labor forbet is
They han no wyte to fynde a wyse
They bē amased, I trowe as stylle
As non other mannes pyne
Foz whan thyne eyen were thyng to pryse
Yet of her cruelte dispyte
Alone they can not hele her loye
But to the herte they sonappe
Pearce thorē thyne to him them bowe
Of al this hastē to make an ende
The eye is a good messangere
Which can to the hert ful wel shewe
Tydynges fende, that goth fast
To voyde him of his payned thought
Wherof the hert erst greth
That a grete parte of his wo
Is voyded, and put away to flyght
Right as the brethen of the myst
Is chased with stremes of the sonne
Right so is al his wo ful sone
Devoyded thens, whan that she sayth

Behelde

Of good stature and of good height
And Bialacoil festeth me right
Home he was to Courtesye
And he me graunted ful gladly
The passage of the water bay
And sayde: Sir, how that ye may
Passe, if yow wyll be
Abyde here stille for to se
And ye the floures fauour frie
Your warrant may right wele
See thou the kepe fro folye
Shal no man do the vilanye
Yf I may helpe you in ought
I shall not fayne, dredeth nought
For I am bounde to your seruyce
Fully devoyde of feyntyse
Than unto Bialacoil sayde I
Iblanke you sir ful hertely
And your behest take at me
That ye so goodly profer me
To you it cometh of great fraunchyse
That ye me proffer your seruyse
Than ather fel be other ly
Through the herres avene went I
Wherof encombred was the haye
I was wet pisfed, the sothe to saye
To se the bothum, fayre and swote
So frethe spronge out of the rote.

And Bialacoyl me serued wele
When I so nighe me myght fele
Of the bothum the swete odoure
And so lusty hewed of colour
But than a choyse soule him beside
Beside the rosis gan hym hyde
To kepe the rosis of that Rosyere
Of whom the name was Daungere
This choyse was hyd there in the grene
Couered with grasse and with leues
To spye and take whom that he fonde
Unto that Rosis put an honde
He was not sole, for ther was mo
For with hym were other two
Of wicked maners, and yuel fame
That one was cleped by hys name
Wicked tonge, god yeue hym sorowe
For neither at eue ne at morowe
He can of no man good speke
On many a iuste man dothe he wreke
There was a woman that eke hyght
Shame, that who can reken right
Coelpace was her fathers name

Her mother Reason, and shame was thanne
Wrought of ryche ylke two
And yet had resystaunce ernest ado
With Reason, ne never ley her by
He was hydous and so vgly
I meane this, that Resystaunce knyght
But Reason conceyueth of a slyght
Shame of that I spake afore
And whan that Shame was thus borne
It was ordayned, that Chastyte
Shulde of the Roser lady be
Whiche of the bothums more and las
With sondrie folke allayed was
That she ne wyste what to do
For Venus her assayleth so
That nyght and day from her she stall
Bothoms and Roses ouer all
To Reason than prayeth Chastyte
Whom Venus hath sleamed ouer the see
That she her doughter wolde her lene
To kepe the Roser frethe and greene
Anon Reason to Chastyte
Is fully assented, that it be
And graunted her, at her request
That Shame, bycause she is honest
Shal keper of the Roser be
And thus to kepe it, there were thre
That none shulde hardy be ne bolde
(Were he ponge or were he olde)
Ageyne her wyll away to bere
Bothoms ne Roses, that there were
I hadde wel spedde, had I nat bene
Awayted with these thre and sene
For Bialacoil, that was so sayre
So gracious and debonayre
Quitte hym to me ful curteisly
And me to please badde that I
Shulde drawe to the bothom nere
Nere in to touche the Rosere
Whiche bare the roses, he yaf me leue
Thys graunt ne myght but lytel greue
And for he sawe it lyked me
Ryght nygh the bothom pulled he
A leafe al greene, and yaue me that
The whiche ful nygh the bothom sat
I made of that leafe ful queynte
And whan I frite I was aqueynte
With Bialacoil and so payne
I wende al my wyl hadde be
That were I hardy for to tell
To Bialacoil howe me befel
Of Loue, that toke and wounded me
And sayd, sir so mote I the
I may as soy haue fond wyth
Upon no syde, but it myght
For sythe (if I shall nat fayne)
In here I haue had so greate payne
So greate anoye and sutche affraye
That I ne wote what I shall saye
I dyde your wyshe to departe
Leuer me were, that empyres herte
My body shulde in peces smalle
Than in any wyse it shulde falle
That ye wrathed shulde ben with me
Say Bialacoil wyll (quod he)
I nyl be wrothe if that I maye
For nought that thou shalt to me saye.

Than said I sir, nat you displese
To knowen of my great disese
In whiche only Loue hathe me
For paines gret, distresse & besynes
Fro day to day it doth me dye (thought
Supposeth not sir, that I lye
In me fyue wounden dyd he make
The sore of whiche shal neuer slake
But ye the bothom graunt me
Whiche is moste pleasaunt of beaute
My lyfe, my dethe, and my mastrye
And tresour that I moste desyre
Than Bialacoil afrayde all
Sayd sir, it may not fall
That ye desyre it may not aryse
What wolde ye shende me in thys wyse
A moket foole than I were
Yf I suffred you away to bere
The frethe bothom, so fayre of syght
For it were neither skyl ne ryght
Of the Roser ye broke the ryude
Or take the rose afore hys kynde
Ye are not curteys to aske it
Let it dyl on the Roser syt
And let it growe til it amended be
And perfectly come to beaute
I nolde not that it pulled were
Fro the Roser that it bere
To me it is so lefe and dere
With that anone sterte out Daungere
Out of the place where he was hydde
Hys malyce in his chere was kydde
Ful great he was and blacke of hewe
Sturdy and hydous, who so hym knewe
Lyke sharpe vschons his here was grow
His eyes red sparclynge as the fire glow
His nose frounced ful kyched stode
He come cryande as he were wode

And

And sayde, Bialacoil tel me why
Thou bringest hyder so boldely
Him that so wygh the Rosere
Thou wotchest in a wronge manere
He hindreth to dishonour the
Thou art wel worthy to haue maugre
To lete hym of the rosere witte
Who serueth a fellonne is euyl quitte
Thou woldest haue done great bounte
And he with shame wolde quite the
Fyrebrace felowe, I rede the go
It wanteth lyte he wol the slo
For Bialacoil ne knewe the nought
Whan the to serue he sette his thought
For thou wolt shame him if thou might
Sothe agayne treason and right
I wol no more in the abyde
That comest so sturdily for tespyde
For it proueth wonder wele
Thy sleight and trayson euery dele
I durste no more make there abode
For the choze, he was so wode
So ganne he thzette and manace
And thzough the hay he dyd me chace
For feare of hym I trembled and quoke
So chozlishly his heed he shoke
And sayde, if efte he might me take
I shulde nat from his hondes scape
Than Bialacoil is fledde and mate
And I al soole and disconsolate
Was lefte alone in payne and thought
Fro shame to dethe I was nigh brought
Than thought on my byghe folye
Howe that my body beteriye
Was yeue to payne and to martyze
And therto hadde I so great yze
That I ne durst the hayes passe
There was no hope, there was no grace
I trowe neuer man wyste of payne
But he were laced in loues chayne
Ne no man, and sothe it is
But if he loue, what anger is
Loue holdeth his herst to me right wele
Whan payne (he sayde) I shulde fele
No hert may thynke, ne tonge sayne
A quarter of my wo and payne
I myght not with the anger last
Myn hert in poynt was for to brast
Whan I thought on the rose, that so
Was thzough Daunger caste me fro
I longe whyle stode I in that state
Tyll that me sawe so madde and mate
The lady of the high warde
Which from her toure loked thiderwarde.

Reason men clepe that lady
Whiche from her toure deliuerly
Come downe to me without moze
But she was neither yonge ne hoze
Ne hygh ne lowe, ne fatte ne lene
But best, as it were in a meane
Her eyen two were clere and lyght
As any candell, that bzenneth bzyght
And on her heed she had a crowne
Her semed wel an hygh persone
For rounde enuyzon her crownet
Was ful of eyche stones fret
Her goodly semblant by deuyse
I trowe was made in paradyse
For nature had neuer suche a grace
To forge a werke of suche compace
For certayne, but if the letter lye
God hym selfe, that is so hye
Made her after his ymage
And yaue her sythe suche auauntage
That she hath myght and seignozie
To kepe men from al folye
Who so wol trowe her loze
Ne may offenden neuermoze.

And whyle I stode this derke & pale
Reson began to me her tale
She sayde, Allhayle my swete frende
Foly and childehod wol the shende
Whiche the haue put in great affray
Thou haste bought dere tyme of May
That made thyn hert mery to be
In yuell tyme thou wentest to se
The gardyn, wherof Idelnesse
Bare the key and was maistresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce
With her and had acquayntaunce
Her acquayntaunce is perylous
First softe, and after noyous
She hath trashed without wene
The god of Loue had the nat sene
Ne had Idelnesse the conueyde
In the berge, where Mirth him pleyde
Yf folye haue surprised the
No so that it ne couered be
And be wel ware to take no moze
Counsayle, that greueth after soze
He is wise, that wol him selfe chastise
And though a yonge man in any wise
Trespasse amonge, and do folye
Lete hym nat tary, but haste hym

Let hym amende what so be mys
And eke I counsayle the twys
The god of Loue holly tozrete
That hath the in suche payne sette
And the in hert turmented so
I can not sene howe thou maist go
Other wayes to garysoun
Foz Daungere, that is so felonn
Felly purposeth the to werrey
Whiche is ful cruel the sothe to sey.

And yet of Dãger cometh no blame
In reward of my doughter shame
Whiche hath the Roses in her warde
As she that may be no musarde
And wicked tonge is with these two
That suffreth no man thyder go
Foz er a thynge be do he shall
Where that he cometh ouer all
In fourty places, if it be sought
Hay thyng þ neuer was don ne wrought
So muche trayson is in hys male
Of falsenesse foz to sayne a tale
Thou deiest with angry folke ywis
Wherfoze to the better is
From these folke away to fare
Foz they wol make the lyue in care
Thys is the yuel that loue they call
Soberin there is but foly al
Foz loue is foly euery dell
Who loueth, in no wise may do wel
Ne sette his thought on no good werke
His scole he leseth, yf he be a clerke
Or other crafte eke, if that be he
He shal not thzyue therin, foz he
In loue shal haue moze pallyoun
Than Monke, hermyte, or chanoun
This payne is harde out of measure
The ioye may eke no whyle endure
And in the possessyon
Is muche trybulacyon
The ioye it is so shoze lastyng
And but in hope is the gettyng
Foz I se there many in trauayle
That at laste foule fayle
I was nothyng thy counsayler
When thou were made the homager
Of god of Loue to hastely
There was no wysdom but foly
Thyn herte was foly, but not sage
When thou were brought in such a rage
To yelde the so redely
And to Loue of his great mastry

Rede the Loue away to banne
That maketh þ trech not of thy
the foli moze fro dai to day
Shalgrowe, but þ it put away
Take with thy tethe the bridell faste
To daunt thy hert, and eke the caste
Yf that thou maiste to gette the defence
Foz to redzesse thy first offence
Who so hys hert alway wol leue
Shal fynde amonge that shal him greue

When I her herde thus me chastice
I answerde in ful angry wyse
I prayde her cesse of her speche
Eyther to chastyce me or teche
To bydde me my thought arreryne
Which Loue hath caught in his demeyne
What were ye Loue wol conferme
(That me assayleth with bowe bente)
To drawe myn hert out of his honde
Whiche is so quickly in his bonde
That ye counsayle may neuer be
Foz when he first arested me
He toke myne hertte so sore hym tyl
That it is nothyng at my wyl
He thought it so him foz to obey
That he it spatred with a key
I praye you let me be al sty
Foz ye may wel, yf that ye wyll
Your wordes waste in ydelnesse
Foz otterly, withouten gesse
Al that ye sayne is but in vayne
Me were leuer dye in the payne
Than Loue to mewarde shulde arette
Falshede or trefon on me sette
I wol me get pris or blame
And loue trewe to saue my name
Who that me chastiseth, I hym hate
With that woide Reson went her gate
When she sawe foz no sermonyng
She might me fro my foly dzyng
Than dismayed I left al coole
Foz werry, foz wandzed as a coole
Foz I ne knewe no cherysaunce
Than fel in to my remembzaunce
Howe Loue badde me to puruey
A felowe, to whom I might sey
My counseyle and my priuyte
Foz that shulde muche auayle me
With that bethought I me, that I
Had a felowe fast by
Trewe and syker, curteys, and hende
And he called was by name a frende

I neuer felowe wist no where none
In haste to hym I went swone
And to hym al my wo I tolde
Fro hym right nought I wold withholde
I told hym al without were
And made my complaynt on Daungere
Howe for to fry he was bydene
And to me warde contrarious
The whiche through hys cruelte
Was in poynt to haue meyned me
With Dialacoll whan he me sy
Within the gardyn walke and play
Fro me he made hym for to go
And I be left alone in wo
I durst no lenger with hym speke
For Daunger sayde he wolde be wreke
Wherfore that he fauor howe I wente
The frethe bothom for to hente
If I were hardy to come nere
Wt were the hay and the Rosere.

This frende whan he wist of my thought
He dyscomforted me right nought
But sayde frienoe, be nat so madde
Ne so abasshed nor bestadde
My selfe I knowe ful wel Daungere
And howe he is fiers of chere
At prime temps, Loue to manace
Ful ofte I haue ben in hys case
I flow first though that he be
Wher thou shalte hym souple se
Of longe passed I knewe hym wele
Ungoodly fleth though men him fele
He wol medle after in hys bearynge
Ben, for seruyce and obeysynge
I shal the erl what thou shalt do
Herely I rede thou go hym to
Of herte praye hym specyally
Of thy trespace to haue mercy
And howe hym wel here to plese
That thou shalt neuer more hym displese
Who can best serue of flatery
Shal please Daunger moste utterly.

My frende hath sayde to me so wele
That be me enfeb hath soudele
And the allegged of my torment
For throughhym had I hardement
Agayne to Daunger for to go
To prine yf I myght meke hym so.

To Daunger came I al ashamed
The whyth afore me had blamed
Desyrynge for to pese my woo
But ouer hedge durst I nat go
For he forbode me the passage
I founde hym cruel in hys rage
And in his honde a great burdown
To hym I kneled lowe adown
Fulmeke of porte, and symple of chere
And sayd sir, I am comen here
Onely to aske of you mercy
That greueth me ful greatly
That euer my lyfe I wrathed you
But for to amende I am come now
With al my might, bothe loude and styl
To done right at your owne wyl
For Loue made me for to do
That I haue trespassed hyderto
Fro whom I ne may withdraw min herte
Yet shal I neuer for ioy ne smert
(What so befall good or yl)
Offende more agayne your wyll
Leuer I haue endure distresse
Than do that shulde you displesse.

If you require, I praye that ye
Of me haue mercy and pitye
To syne your yre þ greueth so
That I wol swerre for euermo
To be rebersed at your lykyng
Yf I trespace in any thyng
Saue that (I pray the) graunt me
A thyng, that may nat warned be
That I may loue al onely
None other thyng of you aske I
I shal done al wel ywys
Yf of your grace ye graunt me this
And ye may nat letten me
For wel wote ye that loue is fre
And I that louen suche that I wyl
Who euer lyke it wel or yl
And yet ne wolde I for al fraunce
Do thyng to do you displesaunce.

Than Daunger syl in his entent
For to forgeue his male talent
But al hys wrathe yet at last
He hath released, I prayed so fast
Shortly (he sayde) thy requeste
Is nat to mokel dishoneste
Ne I wol nat werne it the
For yet nothyng engreueth me
For though thou loue thus euer ma

To

To me lo me sithe sorte me sorg
Loue where? the lyst, what retcheth me
So ferre fro my Roses be
Trust nor on me for none assay
In any tyme to passe the hay
Thus hath he graunted my prayere
Then went I forth without were
Unto my frende, and tolde hym al
Whiche was ryght ioyful of my tale
(he sayde) nowe gothe wel thyne affayre
He shal to the be debonayre
Though he afore was dispitous
He shal hereafter be gracious
Yf he were touched on some good veyne
He shulde yet rewen on thy peyne
Suffer I rede, and no boost make
Tyl thou at good mes maist him take
By sufferaunce, and wordes softe
A man may overcome ofte
Him, that afore he had in hyede
In bokes sothly as I rede
Thus hath my frend with great comfort
Auaunced me with hyghe disport
Whiche wouldbe me good, as muche as I
And than anone ful so dayntly
I toke my leaue, and streight I went
Unto the hay for great talent
I hadde to frete the freshe bothom
wherin lay my salvacyon
And Daunger toke kepe, if that I
Kepe hym couenaunt trewely
So sore I dredde hys manasyng
I durst not breke hys byddyng
For lest that I were of hym shent
I brake not hys commaundement
For to purchase hys good wyll
It was for to come there evyll
His merry was to ferre beyonde
I kept, for I ne might it fynde
I complayned and syghed sore
And languyshed euermore
For I durst nat ouer go
Unto the rose I loued so
Throughout my demyng verely
That he had no vyolege certaynely
Than Loue me ladde in suche wyse
That in me there was no feynyse
Falsheed, ne no trechery
And yet he ful of vyliany
Of disdayne, and cruelte
On me ne wolde have pyte
Hys cruel wyl for to refrayne
Tho I wepte al wey, and me complayne.

And whyle I wast in this mynde
Ryght come of grace, by good hap
Franchyse, with her yonge
Fulfylde the bothom of bonne
They go to Daunger anone ryght
To soothe me with al her myght
And helpe in worde and in dede
For wel they sawe that it was nede
First of her grace dame Franchyse
Hath taken of thys empryse
She sayd, Daunger great wronge ye han
To worche thys man so muche wo
Or pynen hym so angerly
It is to you great vyliany
I can not se, why ne how
That he hath trespassed agayne you
Sone that he loueth, wherefore ye shulde
The more in cherete of him holde
The fayer of lour maketh hym to this
Who wolde hym blame he dyd amys
He leseth more than he may do
Hys payne is harde, it may se to
And Loue is no wyse wolde content
That ye have power to repent
For though that quicke ye wolde him sle
Fro Loue hys herte maye nat go
Nowe swete sir, it is your ease
Hym for to anger or displease
Alas, what may it you auaunce
To . . e to hym so great greuaunce
What worshyp is it agayne hym take
Or on your man a werre make
Seche he so lowely euery wyse
Is redy, as ye lusse deuyse
Yf Loue have caught hym in his lace
You for to bey in euery caas
And ben your subiect at your wyl
Shulde ye therfore wyllen hym yl
Ye shulde hym spare more al out
Than him that is bothe proude and stout
Certes ye wolde that ye socoure
Hem, that ben meke buxsom your cure
His herte is harde that wol not mekely
Whan men of mekenesse hym beseke.

This is certayne, sayde Pyte
Awe se ofte that humblyte
Wothe yte, and also feiony
Urnquisheth, & also melancoly
To stonde forth in suche durese
This cruelte and wickednesse
Wherfore I pray you sir Daungere
For to mayntene no lenger here

Suche

Auche cruel werre agayne your man
Is holly yours as euer he can
Soy that ye wozchen no moze wo
Upon this caytife, that languissheth so
Which wol no moze to you trespace
But put him holly in your grace
His offence ne was but lyte
The god of Loue it was to wite
That he your chyld so greatly is
And yf ye harme him ye done amis
For he hath had ful harde penaunce
Sith that ye refte him thaqueyntaunce
Of Bialacoil, his moste ioye
Whiche al his payues might acoye
He was before anoyed soze
But than ye doubled him wel moze
For he of bidde hath ben ful bare
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare
Loue hath to him great distresse
He hath no nede of moze duresse
Voyderh from him youre yre I rede
Ye may not winnen in this dede
Saketh Bialacoil repayre agayne
And haueth pitie vpon his payne
For Fraunchyse wol, and I pyte
That merciful to him ye be
And sithe that she and I accozde
Haue vpon him misericozde
For I you pray, and eke moneste
Nought to refusen our requeste
For he is harde, and fel of thought
That for vs two wol do right nought
Daunger ne might no moze endure
He meked him vnto measure.

I wol in no wise, saith Daungers
Nay, that ye haue asked here
It were to great vnmeetesse
I wol ye haue the companye
Of Bialacoil, as ye deuyse
I wol him let in no wise
To Bialacoil than went in hye
Fraunchise, and sayd full curtesye
Ye haue to longe, be deignous
Vnto this louer, and daungerous
Fro him to withdrawe your presence
Whiche hath do to him great offence
That ye not wolde vpon him se
Wherfore a sozowfull man is he
Shape ye to pay him, and to please
Of my loue if ye wol haue ease
Fulfyll his will, sithe that ye knowe
Daunger is daunted and brought lowe
Thyonghe helpe of me and of pyte
You dare no moze afferde be
I shal do right as ye wyll
Saith Bialacoil, for it is skyll
Sith Daunger wol that it so be
Than Fraunchise hath him sent to me

Bialacoil at the begynning
Salued me in his commyng
No straungenes was in him sen
No moze than he ne had wzathed
As fayze semblaunt than shewed he me (ben
And goodly, as afozne dyd he
And by the honde without doute
Within the haye right al aboute
He lad me with right good chere
Al enuyzon the vergere
That Daungere had me chased fro
Now haue I leaue ouer al to go
Nowe am I raysed at my deuyse
Fro hel vnto paradyse
Thus Bialacoil of gentylnesse
With all his payne and besyneste
Hath shewed meekely of grace
The estres of the swote place
I sawe the Rose whan I was nygh
Was greatter woxen, and moze hygh
Freshe, roddy, and fayze of hewe
Of colours euer yliche newe
And whan I had it longe sene
I sawe that through the leues grene
The Rose spzed to spannyshynge
To sene it was a goodly thynge
But it ne was so spzede on bzede
That men within myght knowe the sede
For it couerte was and close
Both with the leues and with the rose
The stalke was euen and grene vpzight
It was theron a goodly syght
And well the better without were
For the seed was not sene
Ful fayze it spzad the god of bleste
For suche another, as I geste
Afozne ne was ne moze bermayle
I was abawed for marueyle
For euer the fayzer that it was
The moze I am bounden in loues laas
Longe I abode there sothe to saye
Tyl Bialacoil I gan to praye
Whan that I sawe him in no wyse
To me warnen his seruyce
That he me wolde graunt a thynge
Whiche to remembze is wel sytting

This is to saine, that of his grace
He wolde me yeue leysar and space
To me that was so besyous
To haue a kyssyng precyous
Of the goodly swete Rose
That so swetely smelleth in my nose
For if it you displeased nought
I wold gladly, as I haue sought
Haue a kisse therof freely
Of your grace, for certainly
I wot none haue, but by your leue
So lothe me were you for to greue

He sayd, frende so god me spede
Of Chastite I haue suche drede
Thou shuldest not warned be for me
But I dare not for Chastite
Agayne her dare I not mysdo
For alway bydderth she me so
To yeue no louer leaue to kysse
For who therto may wynnen fysse
Bye of the surplus of the praye
Hy lyke in hope to get some daye
For who so kyssynge may attayne
Of Loues payne hath (soth to sayne)
The best and most auenaunt
And ernest of the remenaunt.

Of his answere I sighed sore
I durst assaye him tho na more
I had further drede to greue him aye
A man shulde not to muche assaye
To chafe his frende out of measure
Nor put his life in auenture
For no man at the first stroke
Ne may not fel downe an oke
Nor of the reysyns haue the wyne
Tyll grapes be ripe and wel a fyne
Be fore empressed, I you ensure
And drawen out of the pressure
But I forpeyned wonder stronge
Though that I abode right longe
After the kysse, in payne and wo
Sith I to kysse destyned so
Tyl that remembrynge on my distresse
There come Venus the goddesse
(Which aye werreyeth Chastite)
Came of her grace to socour me
Whose might is know ferre and wyde
For she is mother of Cupyde

The god of Loue, bryude as flone
That helpeth louers many one
This lady brought in her right honde
Of brennyng fyre a blasyng brande
Liuerok the flame and hote fyre
Wyth many a lady in desyre
Of Loue brought, and for hette
Into in her scruter her hert is sette
This lady was of good enarye
Right wonderful of apparayle
By her atyre so bright and shene
Men might perceyue well and sene
She was not of Religioun
Nor I nyl make mencyoun
Nor of robe, nor of serclous
Of broche, neither of her riche attour
Ne of her gyrdel about her syde
For that I nyl not longe abyde
But knowen ye wel, that certainly
She was arrayed richely
Denoyde of pride certayne she was
To Bialacoil she went a pas
And to him shortely in a clause
She said, sir what is the cause
Ye ben of porte so daungerous
Unto this louer, and daynous
To graunt him nothyng but a kysse
To warne it him ye done amysse
Sithe wel ye wot, howe that he
Is Loues seruaunt, as ye may se
And hath braste, wherthrough is
Worthy of Loue to haue the blys
Howe he is femely beholde and se
Howe he is fayre, howe he is free
Howe he is swete, and debonayre
Of age yonge, lusty, and fayre
There is no lady so hawtayne
Duchesse, countesse, ne chastelayne
That I nolde holde her vngoodly
For to refuse him vtterly
His brethe is also good and swete
And eke his lyppes roddy and mete
Onely to playne, and to kysse
Graunt him a kysse of gentylnysse
His teth arne also white and clene
Me thinketh wronge without wene
If ye nowe warne him, trusteth me
To graunt that a kysse haue he
The lasse ye helpe him that ye haste
And the more tyme shul ye waste
Whan the flame of the very brande
That Venus is brought in her right honde
Had Bialacoil with his hete smete
Anone he bad me without lete
Graunt to me the Rose kysse

Than

Than of my payne I game to lylle
And to the Rose anon went I
And kyssed it ful fayrhfully
There nede no mā aske, if I was blythe
When the sauour softe and lythe
Stroke to myne hert without moze
And me allegged of my soze
So was I ful of ioye and blysse
It is fayze suche a floure to kysse
It was so swote and sauerous
I might not be so angrythous
That I mote glad and ioly be
Whan that I remembze me
Yet euer among sothly to sayne
I suffre noye and moche payne.

The see may neuer be so styll
That with a lyttel wynde at wyll
Ouerwhelme and tourne also
It it were woode in wawes go
Aker the calme the trouble soone
Doth folowe, and chaunge as the moone
Right so fareth Loue, that selde in one
Holdeth his ancre, foz right anone
What they in ease weene best to lyue
They ben with trupesh all fozdryue
Who seweth Loue, can tel of wo
The stoundmele ioye mote ouergo
Nowe he hurteth, and nowe he cureth
Foz selde in o poynte loue endureth

Now is it right me to pzocede
Howe Shame gan medle and rake hede
Though whom fel angres I haue hade
And howe the strong wal was made
And the castell of bzede and length
That god of Loue wan with his strength
All this in Romance will I set
And foz no thyng ne wyll I let
So that it lykyng to her be
That is the floure of beaute
Foz she may best my labour quite
That I foz her loue shal endyte
A sicked tonge that the couyne
Of euery louer can deuyne
Worse, and adderh moze somdele
(Foz wicked tonge sayth neuer wele)
To me warde bare he right great hate
Espyeng me erly and late
Tyl he hath sene the great chere
Of Bialacoil and me yfere
He might not his tonge withstonde
Worse to repozte than he fonde
He was so ful of cursed rage
It sat him wele of his lynage
Foz him an Irishe woman bare
His tonge was fyled sharpe & square
Boignaunt and right keruyng
And wonder bytter in spekyng
Foz whan that he me gan espye
He swoze (affirming sykerly)
Bytwene Bialacoil and me
Was fuel aquayntaunce and priue
He spake therof so foliye
That he awaked Jelousye
Which al afrayed in his rising
Whan that he herde tangling
He ran anon as he were wode
To Bialacoil there that he stode
Which had leuer in his caas
Haue ben at Reynes oz Amyas
Foz sore hote in his felonye
To him thus said Jelousye
Why hast thou ben so negligent
To kepen, whan I was absent
This verger here lefte in thy warde
To me thou haddest no regarde
To trust (to thy confusyon)
Him thus, to whom suspection
I haue right great, foz it is nede
It is wel shewed by the dede
Great faute in the nowe haue I founde
By god anon thou shalte be bounde
And faste locken in a toure
Without refuyte oz socoure.

Foz shame to long hath be the fro
Duer soone she was ago
Whan ? hast lost bothe dzede & fere
It semed wel she was not here
She was besy in no wyse
To kepe the and chastice
And foz to helpen Chastite
To kepe the Roser, as thynketh me
Foz than this boye knaue so boldly
Ne shuld nat haue be hardy
In this verge had suche game
Which nowe me tourneth to great shame.

Bialacoil nyst what to saye
Ful fayne he wold haue fled awaye
Foz feare haue hyd, nere that he
Al sodainly toke him with me
And whan I sawe he had so
This Jelousye take bs two
I was astoned, and knewe no rede

But ſtodde away for drey dredo.

Than Shame came forth ful ſymply
She wende haue trauſpaced ful greatly
Humble of her porte, and made it ſymple
Wearyng a vayle in ſtede of wymple
As nonnes done in her abbey
By cauſe her herte was in affray
She gan to ſpeke within a throwe
To Jelouſye, ryght wonder lowe
Full of his grace ſhe beſought
And ſaid ſir, ne leueth nought
Wicked tonge, that falſe eſpye
Which is ſo glad to fayne and lye
He hath you made, through flatterynge
On Bialacoil a falſe leaſynge
His falſneſſe is not nowe a newe
It is to longe that he him knewe
This is not the fyrſt daye
For wicked tonge hath cuſtome aye
Yonge folkes to bewraye
And falſe leſynges on hem lye

Yet neuertheleſſe I ſe amonge
That the loigne it is ſo longe
Of Bialacoil, herres to lure
In Loues ſeruice for to endure
Drawyng ſuche folke him to
That he hath nothyng with to do
But in ſothneſſe I trowe nought
That Bialacoil had euer in thought
To do treſpace or vilanye
But for his mother Curteſye
Hath taught him euer to be
Good of aqueyntaunce and priue
For he loueth none heuyneſſe
But myrthe and play, and all gladneſſe
He hateth al trechours
Dolcyne folke and enuyous
For ye weten howe that he
Wol euer glad and ioyful be
Honeſtly with folke to pley
I haue be negligent in good fey
To chaſtyſe him, therfore nowe I
Of herte I crye you here mercy
That I haue ben ſo recheles
To tamerhym withouten lees
Of myſcly I me repente
Now wol I hole ſtl myn entente
To kepe both lowe and ſtyll
Bialacoil to do your wyll
Shame Shame (ſaid Jelouſy)
To be betrached greate dredo haue I
Lecherye hath clombe ſo hye
That almoſt blered is myn eye
No wonder is, if that dredo haue I
Ouer al reigneth lechery
Whoſe myght groweth nyght and dey
Both in cloyſter and in abbey
Chaſtite is werried ouer all
Therfore I wol with fyber wall
Cloſe bothe roſes and roſere
I haue to longe in this manere
Lefte hem vncloſed wylfully
Wherfore I am right inwardly
Sorowful, and repent me
But nowe they ſhall no lenger be
Vncloſed, and yet I dredo ſore
I ſhal repent ferthermore
For the game goeth all amys
Counſayle I muſt newe twys
I haue to longe reuſed the
But nowe it ſhal no lenger be
For he may beſt in euery colde
Diſceyue, that men reuben moſte
I ſe wel that I am nyghe ſhent
But if I ſet my ful entente
Remedy to purueye
Wherfore cloſe I ſhall the wey
From hem that woll the roſe eſpye
And come to wayte me bylonge
For in good fayethe and in trouthe
I wol not lete for no ſlouthe
To lyue the more in ſykernelle
Do make anon a fortreſſe
Than cloſe the roſes of good fauour
In myddes ſhal I make a tour
To put Bialacoil in priſon
For euer I dredo me of treſon
I trowe I ſhal him kepe ſo
That he ſhal haue no might to go
Aboute to make compayne
To hem that thinke of vilanye
Ne to no ſuche as hath bene here
Afore, and founde in him good chere
Whiche han aſſayled him to ſchende
And with her trewandiſe to blende
A foole is eyth to begyle
But may I lyue a lyttel whyle
He ſhal forthynke his fayre reſemblaunt
And with ſ worde came Dredo anone
Whiche was abaſhed, and in great fere
When he wyſte Jelouſye was there
He was for dredo in ſuche affray
That not a worde durſte he ſay
But quaking ſtode ful ſtyl alone

Tyll

(Tyl Jelousye his way haue gone)
Daun Shame, that wyl not forsake
goth Dyede and the tul thus spoke
That as last Dyede shuppe
And to his cosyn Shame he sayde

Shame (he sayd) an vnhappe
To me it is great harynesse
That the noyse of Venus go
And the scraumbet of vs two
But syr he that it is befall
We may it not agayne call
When ones spronge is a fame
For many a yere without blame
We have ben, and many a day
For many an Apyll and many a May
We han passed, not shamed
Tyl Jelousye hath vs blamed
Of my trusse and dispection
Coueitise, without cheuetion
Go we to Daunger hastely
And let vs shewe him openly
That he hath out a ryght wronghe
When that he set not his thought
To kepe better the purpasse
In his doyng he is not wise
He hath to vs do great wronge
That hath suffered now so longe
Bialacoil to haue his wyll
At his lustes to fulfyll
He must amende it hastely
Or els shal he blamed surely
Cryed be out of this londe
For he the werre may not withstonde
Of Jelousye, nor the grefe
For the Bialacoil is at mischefe

TO Daunger Shame & Dyede anon
The right way ben gon
The chefe they founde ben afore
Lyggyng vnder an hawethorne
Vnder his heed no pylowe was
But in the stede a trusse of gras
He slombred, and a nappe he take
Tyl Shame pitously him shoke
And great manace on him gan make
Why slepest thou, whan thou shuld wake
(Quod Shame) thou hast vs blame
Who trusteth the, he doth folye
To kepe roses in bothoms
Whan they ben faire in her sesons
Thou art wode to familiere
Where thou shuld be straunge al chere
Stoute of thy porte, eeby to greue
Thou doest great folye for to leue
Bialacoil here lone to call
The yonger man, to shenden vs all
Though that thou slepe, we may here
Of Jelousye great noyse here
Art thou now late, aryse vp an hye
And stoppe sone and beliuerly
All the gappes of the hay
Do no fauour, I the pray
It falleth nothyng to thy name (blame
To make fayre semblant, where he mayste

IF Bialacoil be swerte and free
Vogged & fel thou shuldest be
Froward and outragyous twise
A chorle chaungeth his cuetise is
This haue I herde ofte in sayeng
That man may for no daunteyng
Make a sperhauke of a bosarde
Al men wol holde the for musarde
That debonayre haue founden the
It syteth the nought curteys to be
To do men plesaunce or seruyse
In the it is recreaundyse
Let thy werkes frete and nete
Be lyke thy name, whiche is Daungere
Than al abashed in shewyng
Anon spake Dyede, right thus sayeng
And sayd, Daunger I drede me
That thou ne wolte besy be
To kepe that thou hast to kepe
Whan thou shuldest wake, thou art a slepe
Thou shalt be greued certaynly
If the aspye Jelousy
Or if he trusse the in blame
He hath to day assayled Shame
And chased away, with greate manace
Bialacoil out of this place
And sweareth shortly that he shall
Enclose him in a sturdy wall
And al is for thy wicke dueste
For that the fayleth straun zeuesse
Thine herte I trowe be fayled al
Thou shalt repent in speciall
If Jelousye the sothe knewe
Thou shalt forthynke, and sore rewe.

WIth the chorle his clubbe gan shake
Frowuyng his eyen gan to make
And hydous chere, as man in rage
For yre he brent in his visage
Whan that he herde him blamed so

He saide, and of my herte I felte
To be dischargyd I thanke hym swete
Certes I have no wyll to wrange
Wythe hym more that dothe me wronge
Al quytes I holde be betwene hem
Yf any man yeve more trespye
In to this gardein for feale or fraye
Wyne herr for me gothe a tree
That I let any entre here
I have do folly howe I se
But nowe is that amended be
Who lettyth more for tree any more
Truly he shall repent it sore
Fonde man more in to this place
Of me to entre shall have grace
Lever I had with Envies rancour
Throughout myn herte, in every vayne
Percyd to be, with many a wounde
Than slouthe within me be founde
From henceforth by myght or day
I shall defende it as I may
Without any exception
Of eche manner condicion
And if I it any man graunte
Holdyth me for covenaunte.

Thy Daunger on his tree that stode
And bent a bardowne his honde
Wyche in his tre me lefte he nought
But through the berger he hath sought
If he myght fynde hole or trace
Where throughe that me more myght pace
Or any gappe, he bet it eche
That no man myght touche a twige
Of the Roser al about
He shytteth every man without.

Thus day by day Daunger it kepes
More wonderful and more dyvers
And feller eke, than ever he was
For him for ere I hynge alas
For I ne may nought, though hit me
Recover that I made be fre
Wyne herr alas, whol bern a two
For Bialacoil I went hem to
For certaynly in every membre
I quake, whan I me remembre
Of the bormen, whiche I wolde
Ful ofte a day sene and beholde
And whan I thynke upon the sight
And how Mochel love and dyvyse
I had to plucke the fruyt I were
For want of it I grone and greve
Be thynketh I fele yet in my throte
The swete savour of the rote
And how I wolde have it more gle
So lefte me have Bialacoil
To me ful pleasaunt Cortesye betyde
Abstynence eyther eake and pryde
For wherfore wolde this Roser ayme
I touche neither floures ne twige
But now the bern I make wrothe
But Love comforte ever more be
That ones I lefte me may susteyne
I trowe my payne shal never lyne
Theron is all my covetyse
Which byrnt myne herte in many wyse
Now that I spake of Envy afore
Long wacche on hyr have I no slepyng
Thought in myn herte rancour, and woo
With many a rufull wo to doo
That halfe my payne I can not tell
For I am fallen in to hell
From paradyse and therto, the more
My turment greveth sore, and more
Anoyeth now for penaunce
That I before have felte hardynesse
And wicked wrange, through hir falsnesse
Causeth al my woe and bitte
On me be leyde a perils charge
Wycault hir tonge was to large,

Now it is tyme shortly that I
Tel you somthyng of Jelosy
That was in grete suspecion
About him lette he no mansion
That Gone could have an querelous
He hyt them to make clene
And first the roses for to kepe
About hem made he a thicke depe
Right wonder large, and also brode
Upon the whiche also rode
Of squared stone a fayre wall
Wyche on a cragge was founded all
And right grete dilygence the to take
About it was founded square
In bundred fadome all every tyde
It was al tyme longe and wyde
Lest any tyme it were assayled
Ful wel about it was bataylled
And roundbe empaled the were les
Ful many a tiche and tryst fourmet
At every corner of this wall
Was set a tour ful principall
And every the had without fable
A portcolyse defendable
To kepe of enemyes, and to greve

That

That there her figure wolde appeare
And she anone forth gan espie
It was made a wonder queintely
Fayrer sawgh no man liuing of gode
Large and wyde, and of great mygth
They hadden hewe atwene
Of grene, Goose, and Sandrede
The remenaunt of the mosaike
It was made of freshe wodes here
Of quicke lyme perfourne and egre
The whiche doth frampeth with vinegre
The stone was harder of adamant
Whyrof they made the foundement
The rouf was rounde made in compas
In al this worlde no speche was
Ne better to shapen there withal
Thour the rowe was made a wal
So that no wyght that was therin
Roses were set of fayre fasoune
With many a cole chaplet bete
And eke with the rudel mete
Hyrngoldes, Goonnes, Bowes, Archers
And eke about an enuyron
Men seyne ouer the wal stonde
Great engyns, for to caste dartes
And in the kernels here and there
Of habilments great plente were
None armour might her stroke withstonde
It were folye to pleyne to longe
Without the walle were ipsed ma
With wel barnyshed large and wyde
For hem and hyr it shulde not auayle
To myghte lepe ouer the plaine a
Thus stronge was enuyron
Sette aboute hyr garnysons
With walles rounde, and dyches depe
Enuyr the Wolfe for to kepe
And Dangyer ay with lare
The keyes kept of the yate gate
The which opened to wander ryll
And he had with hym at hest
Thirty Sergeauntes rebous by name
Thus other gate kept Shame
Whiche opened, as it was to myne
Towarde the parte of eyse fro the
Sergeauntes assigned were her to
Ful many, for wyst for to do
Than dyede had in her baylye
The kepyng of the coste fastenesse
Towarde the northe I understonde
That opened vpon the lefte honde
The whiche for nothyng may be sure
But yf she do besy cure
Enuy awmoyd her, and also hate
Strongly to shette and barre the gate
Of euery thynge that she may se
Dyede is aferde, nothyng so she be
For with a puffe of lyttel wynde
Dyede is astowned in her mynde
Therfore for shutyng of the yate
I rede her nat the yate vnclose
I fowles flyght wolde make her fle
And eke a shadowe if she is se

THan wicked tonge ful of enuy
Ay tothy soudiers of Normandy
Is he that raueth all debate
It was keper of the fourthe gate
And also to the tother thre
He went ful ofte for to se
Whan hys lorde was to walke a nyght
Hys instrumentes wolde he dyght
For to blowe and make solowne
Ofter than he hath eucheloune
And walken oft vpon the wal
Corners and tolketres ouer al
Ful narowe strecchen and espye
Though he nought fonde, yet wolde he lye
Discordaunt euer fro armonye
And distoned from melodye
Contrarye he wolde, and foule fayle
With hornpypes of Cornwayle
In stoutes made he discordaunce
And in his mayne with mischaunce
He wolde seyne with notes newe
That he fonde no woman trewe
Ne that he knewe ought in hys lyfe
Vnto her husbonde a trewe wyfe
Ne none so ful of honeste
That she nyl laugh and merye be
Whan that she seeth of many a syppe
I man speken of lecherye
Euerych of hem hath some vyce
One is vnhonest, another is nyce
Yf one be ful of vylanye
In seyne many a spytous eye
If one be ful of wantonesse
Another is a chyderesse.

Thus wicked tonge, god yeue hym shame.
Can put hem euerychone in blame
Without desert and cause reson
He lyeth, though they ben gylteles
I wan pray to serue this folowe
That waketh both erly and late
To innocentes doth suche greuaunce

I pray god yeue hym yuel chaunce
That he euer so besy is
Of any woman to seyne ought
The Jelousye god confounde
That hath made a toure so rounde
And made about a garyson
To serue Bialacoil to prison
The whiche is therre shette in the tour
Ful longe to holde therre soiourn
There for hym in penaunce
And for to do hym more grenaunce
Is thilke hath ordayned Jelousye
In olde wyse for to espye
The maner of hys gouernaunce
The whiche Deuyl in her enfaunce
Had learned of louers arte
And of his pleys tolde her parte
Sithe was except in hys temple
She knewe eche wyndre and euery gyle
Of Loue, and euery whyple
It was harde her to begyle
Of Bialacoil the tolke aye bede
That euer he liueth in wo and drede
He kepte hym coye and eke prime
Lest in hym she had hadde se
Any foly countenaunce
For she knewe al the olde daunce
And after this whan Jelousye
Had Bialacoil in hys baylye
And shette hym vp that was so free
For sure of hym he wolde be
He trusteth sore in hys castell
The stronge werke hym lyberthe well
He dradde nat that no gloton
Shulde steale his Roses or bothom
The roses weren assured al
Defenced with the stronge wal
Nowe Jelousye ful wel may be
Of drede demoyde in lyberte
Whether that he slepe or wake
For of hys roses may none be take.

But I (alas) nowe mourne shal
Because I was without counsail
Ful muche dole & more I made
Who had wyst what wo I had
I trowe he wolde haue had pyte
Loue to here had tolde me
The good that of hys loue had I
I went about it al queynte
But nowe through vnbeleyng of my peyne
I feare wol it fel agayne
And my newe bargayne lese
The whiche almost for nought is lorne
For the fulsom hope I haue beyne
That I was trewest ameynt
Certayne I am ful lyke in deede
To hym that falle in cruel tyes fede
And hath ioy of the meate he forgate
Whan it greueth in the prouyng
And is all o fayre and freshe of floure
Lusty to sene, swete of odoure
But er he it in throtes throwe.
Why sal a waterber ryght thal it berre
And make it rol fode and sal
The stalke, the greyne, and flowres al
That to the ryuers is foodsome
The hope that he had to come
I dare be sworne that to sure I
For hope and trauayle ouerthrew
Ben me byfore al with a flowre
The floure myn herten of my counsayle
For Loue hath so enamoured me
Whan I began my pleynte
To Bialacoil al for to tell
Whom I ne founde traytour ne fel
But tolde ogayn al hole my play
But loue is of so harde alay
That al at ones he ouerhaue me
Whan I wende best aboute to haue be
It is of loue, all of fortune
That chaungeth oft, and pryncipaly
Where women wost on fayre fayrye
And glombe on hem semeth wilde
Nowe fumbe, nowe fot, shathe her tide
For a thyng thyng turneth her wlyde
She cannot wisely her bird stony
This is the commune of her play
She can mercyle that bothe sayntes
And whirle about and ouerthrowe
Who lyueth lyeyll, but al her laft
A foole is he that wol be trayed
For ill is I shal am counsayled
Thoughe charge and besonges
Bilde Bialacoil more fro me enclose
Where in the prison yonde with grete
Hys absence al myne herte I fele
For al my ioy and al myne hele
Was in hym, and in the stalle
That but you wol, which him both dose
Open, that I may hym se
Loue wol or that I mysd be
Of the peynes that I endure
Nor of my cruel auenture.

Ah, Bialacoil myn owne dere
Though ꝑ be nowe a ꝓisonere
Kepe at leest thyn hert to me
And suffre not ꝑ it daunted be
Ne let not iclousye in hys rage
Pattern thyne hert in no seruage
Alhough he chastice the without
And make thy body vnto hym lout
Haue hert as harde as diamaunt
Stedfast, and naught pryaunt
In ꝓison though thy body be
At large kepe thyn herte free
I trewe hert wyl not plye
For no manace that it may dye
If Jelousye dothe the payne
Quite hym hys while thus agayne
To venge the at leest in thought
If other way thou maist nought
And in this wyse subtelye
Worche, and wynne the maistrye
But yet I am in great affray
Lest thou do nat as I say
I drede thou canst me great maugre
That thou enꝓisoned art for me
But that nat for my trespace
For through me neuer discouered was
Yet thyng, that ought be secre
Is more annoye is in me
Than is in the of thys misthaunce
For I endure more harde penaunce
Than any can sayne or thynke
That for the sorowe almoste I synke
When I remembre me of my wo
Ful nygh out of my wytte I go.
Inwarde myn herte I seie biede
For comfortlesse the derthe I drede
Owe I nat wel to haue distresse
When false, through her wickednesse
And trayterous, that arne enuyous
To noyen me, be so corragyous
Ah, Bialacoil ful wel I se
That they hem shape to deceyue the
To make the buxum to her lawe
And with her corde the to drawe
Where so hem lust, right at her wyl
I drede they haue the brought there tyll
Without comforte, thought me sleeth
This game wol bring me to my dethe
For yf your good wyl I lese
I mote be dred I may not chese
And if that thou forgete me
Myn hert shal neuer in lykyng be
For elswhere fynde solace
If I be put out of your grace
As it shal neuer den I hoope
Than shulde I fal in wanhope
Alas, in wanhope: nay parde
For I wol neuer dispeyred be
Yf hope me fayle, than am I
Ungracious and vnworthy
In hope I wol comforted be
For Loue, whan he betaught her me
Sayd, that hope where so I go
Shulde aye be releres to my wo
But what and she my baies bete
And be to me curteys and swete
She is in nothyng ful certayne
Louers she put in ful great payne
And maketh hem with wo to dele
Her fayre beheste deceyueth fele
For she wol behote sykerly
And faylen after vtterly
Ah, that is a full noyous thyng
For many a louer in louyng
Hangeth vpon her, and trusteth fast
Whiche lese her trauayle at the last
Of thing to comen she wot ryght nought
Therfore if it be wysely sought
Her counsayle foly is to take
For many tymes, whan she wol make
A ful good silogisme, I drede
That afterwarde ther shal in dede
Folowe an yuel conclusyon
This put me in confusyon
For many tymes I haue it sene
That many haue begyled bene
For trust that they haue set in hope
Whiche fel hem afterwarde a slope.

But nathelesse yet gladly she (wolde
That he ꝑ wol him vnder her hold
Had al tymes her purpose clere
Without deceyt any where
That she desyreth sykerly
When I her blamed I dyd foly
But what anayleth her good wyl
When she ne may staunche my stound yt
That helpeth lytel that she may do
Outtake beheste vnto my wo
And hereof certayne in no wyse
Without yfete is not to ꝓyse.

When hereof and dede a sondre bary
They done a great contrary
Thus am I pose'd vp and downe
With doie, thought, and confusioune

Of

Of my diſeaſe there is no nombre
Daunger and Shame me encombre
Drede alſo, and Jelouſye
And Wicked tonge ful of enuye
Of whiche the ſharpe and cruel Ire
Ful ofte me putte in great martyre
They haue my loue fully lette
Sithe Bialacoil they haue bi ſhette
Fro me in priſon wickedly
Whom I loue ſo entierly
That it wol my bane be
But I the ſoner may hym ſe
And yet more ouer worſt of al
There is ſette to kepe, foule her befal
A Rympled becke ferre ronne in rage
Frownyng and yelowe in her viſage
Whiche in awayte lyeth day and nyght
That none of hem may haue a ſyght.

Now mote my ſorow enforced be
Ful ſoth it is þ Loue yate me
Thre wõder yeftes of his grace
Which I haue lorne now in this place
Sithe they ne may without drede
Helpen but lytel who taketh hede
For here auayleth no Swete thought
And ſwete Speche helpeth right nought
The thirde was called ſwete Lokynge
That nowe is lorne without leſynge.

Yeftes were fayre, but nat for thy
They helpe me but ſymply
But Bialacoil looſed be
To gone at large and to be free
For hym my lyfe lyeth al in dout
But yf he come the rather out
Alas I trowe it wol nat bene
For howe ſhulde I euermore him ſene
He may nat out and that is wronge
Bycauſe the tour is ſo ſtronge
How ſhulde he out, or by whoſe proweſſe
Of ſo ſtronge a forteresſe
By me certayne it nyl be do
God wotte I haue no wytte therto
But wel I wote I was in rage
Whan I to Loue dyd homage
Who was the cauſe (in ſothfaſtneſſe)
But her ſelfe dame Idelneſſe
Which me conueyde through fair prayere
To entre in to that fayre bergere
Whe was to blame me to leue
The whiche nowe doth me ſore greue
A fooles worde is nought to trowe
Ne worthe an apple for to lowe
Yet ſhulde hem ſmyte bitterly
At prime temps of hys foly
I was a foole, and ſhe me leued
Through whom I am right nought releued
She accomplyſhed al my wyl
That nowe me greueth wonderyl.

Reaſon me ſayde what ſhuld fal
I foole my ſelfe I may wel cal
That loue aſide I had not laid
And trowed þ dame Reſõ ſaid
Reſon had bothe ſkyll and ryght
Whã ſhe me blamed, wt al her myght
To medle of Loue, that hath me ſhent
But certayne nowe I wol repent

And ſhulde I repent, may patte
A falſe traytour, thẽ ſhuld I be
The diuels engis wold me take
Yf I my loue wolde forſake
Or Bialacoil falſely betraye
Shulde I at miſchefe hate hym maye
Sithe he nowe for hys curteſye
Is in priſon of Jelouſye
Curteſye certayne dyd he me
So muche, that it may not yolden be
Whan he the hay paſſen me lete
To kyſſe the Roſe, fayre and ſwete
Shul I therfore corne hym maugre
Nay certayuly, it ſhal not be
For Loue ſhal neuer preue good wyl
Here of me, through worde or wyl
Offence or complaynt more or leſſe
Neither of Hope nor Idelneſſe
For certes it were wronge that I
Hated hem for her curteſy
There is not eles, but ſuffre and thynke
And waken whan I ſhulde wynke
Abyde in hope, til loue through chaunce
Sende me ſucour or allegeaunce
Expectant aye tyll I may mete
To getten mercy of that ſwete.

Whilom I thinke howe Loue to me
Sayde he woulde take at gre
My ſeruyce, if vnpacience
Cauſed me to done offence
He ſayde, in thanke I ſhal it take
And high maiſter eke the make
If wickednesſe ne reue it the
But ſone I trowe that ſhal nat be
Theſe were hys wordes by and by

It semed he loued me trewely
Nowe is there not but serue hym wele
If that I thynke hys thanke to fele
My good myn harme, lythe hole in me
In Loue may no defaute be
For trewe loue ne fayled neuer man
Sothely the faute mote nedes than
As god forbyde, be founde in me
And howe it cometh, I can not se
Nowe let it gone as it may go
Whether Loue wol sucour me or slo
He may do hole on me hys wyll
I am so forbounde hym tyll
From hys seruyce I may not flene
For lyfe and dethe withouten wene
Is in hys hande, I may not chese
He may me do bothe wynne and lese
And sythe so fore he bothe me greue
Yet yf my lust he wolde acheue
To Bialacoil goodly to be
I prae no force what fel on me
For though I dye, as I mote nede
I pray Loue of hys goodlyhede
To Bialacoil do gentylnesse
For whom I lyue in suche distresse
That I mote dyen for penaunce
But first, without repentaunce
I wol me confesse in good entent
And make in halte my testament
As louers done that felen smerte
To Bialacoil leaue I myn herte
Al hole, without departyng
Or doublenesse of repentyng.

¶ Coment Raison vient a Lamant.

Thus as I made my passage
In compleynt, & in cruel rage
And I not wher to finde a leche
That couthe vnto min helpyng (eche
Sodaynely agayne comen doun
Out of her tour I sawe Reasoun
Discrete and wyse, and full plesaunt
And of her porte ful auenaunt
The right way she toke to me
Whiche stode in great perplexite
That was poshed in euery syde
That I nyst wher I myght abyde
Tyl she demurely sadde of chere
Sayd to me as she came nere
Myn owne frende, arte thou greued
Howe is this quarel yet archeued
Of loues syde, anone tel me
Hast thou not yet of Loue thy fyle
Art thou nat wery of thy seruyce
That the hath in suche wyse
What ioy haste thou in thy louyng
Is it swete or bytter thyng
Canst thou yet chese, lette me se
What best thy sucour myght be.

Thou seruest a ful noble lorde
That maketh the thral for thy reward
No riche aye reneweth thy tourment
With foly so he hath the blent
Thou fel in mischefe thylke daye
Whan thou diddest the sothe to saye
Obeysaunce and eke homage
Thou wroughtest nothyng as the sage
Whan thou became his liege man
Thou dyddest a great foly than
Thou wistest nat what fel therto
With what lorde thou haddest to do
Yf thou haddest hym wel knowe
Thou haddest nought be brought so lowe
For yf thou wyst what it were
Thou noldest serue hym halfe a yere
Nat a weke, nor halfe a daye
Ne yet an houre without delaye
Ne neuer I loued paramours
Hys lordshyppe is so ful of shours
Knowest hym ought.
Lamaunt. Ye dame parde
Raysoun. Nay nay. Lamaunt, yes I
Raysoun. Wherfore lette se
Lamaunt. Of that he sayde I shulde be
Gladde to haue suche lorde as (he)
And maister of suche seignorye
Raysoun, knowest hym no more
Lamaunt. Naye certes I
Saue that he yafe me rules there
And went his waye, I nyst where
And I abode bounde in balaunce
Lo, there a noble comfaunce

¶ Raysoun.

But I wolle that ꝑ know hi now
Ginning a ende, sithe that thou
Art so anguishous and mate
Disfygured out of astate
There may no wreche haue more of wo
Ne caytyfe none enduren so
It were to euery manne sytting
Of hys lorde haue knowlegyng
For if thou knewe hym out of dout
Lyghtly thou shuldest scapen out
Of thy prison that marreth the

Lamaunt. And

Ye dame seyth my lorde is de
And I hys manne made with myn honde
I wolde ryght fayne vnderstonde
To knowe of what kynde he be
If any wolde enforme me.

¶ Mayloun.

I wolde (sayde Reason) the lere
Sith ȝe to learne hast such dysire
And shewe the without fable
A thyng that is not demostrable
Thou shalt without science
And knowe without experience
The thyng that may not knowen be
Ne wyste ne shewed in no degre
Thou mayst the sothe of it not witten
Though in theit were witten
Thou shalt not knowe therof more
Whyle thou art ruled by hys lore
But vnto hym that loue wol flye
The knotte may vnclosed be
Which hath to the, as it is founde
So longe to knytte and not vnbounde
Nowe sette wel thyn entencyon
To here of loue discripcion.

Lone it is an hatefull pees
A free acquytaunce wont to ches
And thrauȝ ȝ fret ful of falshede
A sickernesse al fet in drede
Inhert is a dispeyrynge hoope
And ful of hoope it is wanhoope
Wise woodnesse, and voyde Reason
A swete peryl in to drowne
An heuy burthen lyght to beare
A wicked wawe away to weare
It is Carybdes perylous
Disagreable and gracious
It is discordaunce that can acorde
And accordaunce to discorde
It is conning without science
Wisdome without sapience
Witte without discrecyon
Hanoyre without possessyon
It is lyke hele and hole sickenesse
A trusse drowned and dronkenesse
And helthe ful of maladye
And charyte ful of envye
And angre ful of habundaunce
And a gredy sufferaunce
Delyte ryght ful of heuynesse
And derrayed ful of gladnesse
Bytter swetenesse and swete errour
Ryght yuel sauoured good sauour
Hem that pardone hath withinne
And pardone spotted without sinne
Payne also it is toyous
And felowye ryght pyteous
Also playe that felde is stable
And stedfast right meuable
A strength weyked to stonde bryght
And febleneste ful of myght
Witte vnauysed, sage foly
And ioy ful of turmentrye
A laughter it is wepyng aye
Rest that trauayleth nyght and daye
Also a swete hel it is
And a sorowful paradis
A pleasaunt gayle and easy prisoun
And ful of froste somer season
Prime temps ful of frostes whyte
And May denoyde of al deryte
With fret braunches blossoms bargene
And newe frute fylled with wynter tene
It is a flowe maye nat forbeare
Ragges rybaned with golde to weare
For al so wel wol loue be sette
Under ragges as ryche rochette
And ehe as wel by amorettes
In mourning blacke, as bright burnettes
For none is of so mokel pryse
Ne no man founden so wyse
Ne none so hygh of parage
Ne no man founde of wytte so sage
Now so hardy ne so wight
Ne no man of so mokel myght
None so fulfylled of beaute
That he with loue may daunted be
Al the worlde holdeth this way
Loue maketh al to gone myswaye
But it be they of yuel lyfe
Whom Genius curseth manne and wyfe
That wrongly werke agayne nature
None suche I loue, ne have no cure
Of suche as loues seruauntes beue
And wol nat by my counsayle leue
For I ne preyse that louyng
Wherethrough man at the laste endyng
Shal cal hem wretches ful of wo
Loue greueth hem and shendeth so
But if thou wolte wel loue eschewe
For to escape out of hys mewe
And make al hole thy sorowe to slake
No better counsayle mayst thou take
Than thynke to fleen wel ywis
Way nought helpe eis, for wit thou thes
If thou flye it, it shal flye the
Folowe it, and folowen shal it the.

Remeuy

¶ Lamaunt.

Whan I had herde Reason sayne
Which had spilte her speche in vayne
Dame (saide I) I dare wel saye
Of this auaunt me wel I maye
That from your scholе so deuiaunt
I am, that neuer the more auaunt
Right nought am I through your doctryne
I dulle vnder your disciplyne
I wot no more than wyfe euer
To me so contrary and so fer
Is euery thyng that ye me lere
And yet I can it al by partuere
Myne herte forgeteth therof right nought
It is so writen in my thought
And depe grauen it is so tender
That al myne hert I can it render
And rede it ouer communely
But to my selfe lewdest am I.

But sith ye loue discryuen so
And lacke and preise it bothe two
Defyneth it in to this letter
That I may thynke on it the better
For I herde neuer diffined here
And wylfully I wolde it lere
If loue be serched wel and sought
It is a syckenes of the thought
Annexed and knedde betwyxt tweyne
With male and female with o cheyne
So freely ỳ byndeth, that they nyl twynne
Whether so therof they lese or wynne
The rote sprigeth through hote brenning
In to disordynate desyring
For to kyssen and embrace
And at her lust them to solace
Of other thyng loue retcheth nought
But setteth her hert and al her thought
More for delectacioun
Than any procreacioun
Of other fruite by engendrure
Which loue to god is nat pleasure
For of her body frupte to gette
They yeue no force, they are so sette
Upon delyte to playe in fere
And some haue also this manere
To fayne hem for loue seke
Suche loue I preise not at a leke
For paramours they do but fayne
To loue trewly they disdayne
They falsen ladyes traytourfly
And swerne hem othes bitterly
With many a leasyng, & many a fable
And al they fynden disceyuable
And whan they han her lust getten
The hoote ernes they al forgetten
Women the harme byen ful sore
But men this thynken euermore
That lasse harme is, so mote I thee
Disceyue them, than disceyued be
And namely where they ne maye
Fynde none other meane waye
For I wot wel in sothfastnesse
That what dothe nowe his besynesse
With any woman for to dele
For any lust that he may fele
But if it be for engendrure
He doth trespasse I you ensure
For he shulde serten al his wyl
To getten a lykely thynge him tyl
And to sustayne, if he myght
And kepe forthe by kyndes right
His owne lykenesse and semblable
For bycause al is corrumpable
And fayle shulde successyoun
Ne were their generacioun
Our sectes sterue for to saue
Whan father or mother arne in graue
Her children shulde, whan they ben dede
Ful dilygent bene in her stede
To vse that warke on suche a wyse
That one may through another rise
Therfore set kynde therin delyte
For men therin shuld hem delyte
And of that dede be not erke
But ofte sythes haunt that werke
For none wolde drawe therof a draught
Ne were delyte, whiche hath him caught
This had subtyl dame Nature
For none gothe right I the ensure
Ne hath entent hoole ne parfyte
For her desyre is for delyte
The whiche forfened ceasse, and eke
The playe of loue, for ofte seke
And thrall hem selfe they be so nyce
Unto the prynce of euery vyce
For of eche synne it is the rote
Unlefull luste, though it be sote
And of al euel the racyne
As Tullyus can determyne
Whiche in his tyme was ful sage
In a boke he made of age
Where that more he prayseth elde
Though he be croked and vnwelde
And more of commendacyoun
Than youth in his discripcioun

For youthe set both man and wife
In al parel of soule and lyfe
And parel is, but men haue grace
The parel of youthe for to pace
Without any deth or distrelle
It is so ful of wylonesse
So ofte it bothe shame and domage
To him or to his lynage
It ledeth man, now vp now down
In mokel dissolucioun
And maketh him loue vuel company
And lede his lyfe disrulyly
And halte him payde with none estate
Within him selfe is suche debate
He chaungeth purpose and entent
And yalte in to some conent
To lyuen after her empryse
And leseth fredome and fraunchyse
That nature in him had sette
The which agayne he may not gette
Yf he there make his mansyon
For to abyde profession
Though for a tyme his herte absente
It may not kayle, he shal repente
And eke abyde thylke day
To leaue his abyte, and gon his way
And leseth his worshyp and his name
And dare not come agayne for shame
But al his lyfe he doth so mourne
Bycause he dare not home retourne
Fredome of kynde so lost hath he
That neuer may recured be
But that if God him graunte grace
That he may, er he hence pace
Conteyne vnder obedyence
Through the vertue of pacience
For youth set man in al folye
In vnthrifte and in ribaudrye
In lechery, and in outrage
So ofte it chaungeth of corage
Youth gynneth ofte such bargayne
That may not ende without payne
In great parel is set youth hede
Delyte so doth his bridel lede
Delyte this hangeth, drede the nought
Both mans body and his thought
Onely through youthes chambere
That to done vuel is customere
And of naught els taketh hede
But onely folkes for to lede
Into dispoyte and wildenesse
So is froward from sadnesse
But elde draweth hem therfro
Who wote it not, he may wel go
And mo of hem, that no woe arne olde
That whilom youth had in holde
Whiche yet remembreth of tender age
How it him brought in many a rage
And many a folye therin wrought
But now ȳ elde hath him through sought
They repent hem of her folye
That youthe hem put in ieopardye
In parel and in moche wo
And made hem ofte annyse to do
And sewen vuil companye
Ryot and abusioune.

But elde gan agayne restrayne
From suche folye, and refrayne
And set men by her ordynaunce
In good rule and gouernaunce
But vuel she spendeth her seruise
For no man wol her loue, neyther preyse
She is hated, this wote I wele
Her acqueyntaunce wolde no man fele
Ne han of elde companye
Men hate to be of her alye
For no man wolde become olde
Ne dye, whan he is ponge and bolde
And elde merueyleth right greatly
Whan they remembre hem inwardly
Of many a perilous empryse
Which that they wrought in londry wyse
How euer they myght without blame
Escape awaye without shame
In youth without domage
Or repryse of her lynage
Losse of membre, shedyng of blood
Parel of dethe, or losse of good
Wost thou nat where youthe abyt
That men so preysen in her wyt
With Delyte the halte soiour
For both they dwellen in o tour
As long as youthe is in season
They dwellen in one mansyon
Delyte of youthe wol haue seruice
To do what so he wol deuyse
And youthe is redy euermore
For to obey for swerte of sore
Unto Delyte, and him to yeue
Her seruyce, whyle that she may lyue.

Where elde abyte, I wol the tel
Shortly, and no while dwel
For thyder behoueth the to go
Yf dethe in youth the not slo

Of this iourney thou mayste not fayle
With her labour and trauayle
Lodged ben with sorowe and woo
That neuer out of her route go
Payne and dystresse, syckenesse, and ye
And melancoly that angry syze
Ben of her paleys senatours
Groning & grutching, her her begrours
The day and nyghte her to tourment
With cruel derth they her presente
And tellen her ryghte and late
That derth stondeth armed at her gate
Than bringe they to her remembrannce
The foly dedes of her enfaunce
Whiche causen her to mourne in wo
That youth hath her begyled so
Whiche sodainly away is hasted
She weped the time that she hath wasted
Complayning of the preterytte
And the present, that nat abytte
And of her olde banyte
That but aforne her she maye se
In the future some socoure
To leggen her of her dolour
To graunt her tyme of repentannce
For her synnes to do penaunce
And at the last so her gouerne
To wynne the ioye that is eterne
Fro which go backwarde youthe he made
In banyte to drowne and wade
For present tyme abydeth nought
It is more swyfte than any thought
So lytel while it doth endure
That there nys compte ne measure
But how that euer the game go
Who lyst to loue ioye and myrthe also
Of loue, be it he or she
Hye or lowe who it be
In trute they shulde hem delyte
Her parte they may not els quite
To saue hem selfe in honeste
And yet ful many one I se
Of women, sothly for to sayne
That desyre, and wolde fayne
The playe of Loue, they be so wylde
And nat coueyte to go with childe
And yf with childe they be perchaunce
They wol it holde a great mischaunce
But what so euer wo they fele
They wol not playne, but councele
But if it be any foole or nyce
In whome that shame hath no iustyce
For to Delyte echone they drawe
That haunt this worke both hye & lawe
Saue suche ỳ arne worth right nought
That for money wol be bought
Suche loue I preyse in no wyse
Whan it is gyuen for couetyse
I preyse no woman, though so be woode
That reuerth her selfe for any goode
For lytel shuld a man relie
Of her, that wyl her body selle
Be she mayde, be she wyfe
That quicke wol selle her by her lyfe
Howe fayre there that euer she make
He is a wrecche I vndertake
That loued suche one, for swete or soure
Though she him called her paramoure
And laugheth on him, & maketh him feest
For certaynly no suche breest
To be loued is nat worthy
Or beare the name of Dury
None shulde her please, but he wer woode
That wol dispoyle him of his goode
Yet natheles I wol not saye
That she for solace and for playe
Haye a lewel or other thynge
Take of her loues free yeuynge
But that she aske it in no wyse
For drede of shame, or couetyse
And she of hers maye him certayne
Without sclaunder yeuen agayne
And ioyne her hertes togyder so
In loue, and take and yeue also
Trowe nat that I wol hem twynne
Whan in her loue there is no synne
I wol that they togyder go
And done al that they han ado
As curtes shulde and debonayre
And in her loue beren hem fayre
Without vice, both he and she
So that alwaye in honeste
Fro folly loue to kepe hem clere
That brenneth hertes with his fere
And that her loue in any wyse
Be deuoyde of couetyse
Good loue shuld engendred be
Of trewe hert, iuste, and secree
And not of suche as set her thought
To haue her lust, and els nought
So are they caught in loues lace
Trewly for bodily solace
Fleshely delyte is so present
With the, that ses al thyne entent
Without more, what shulde I glose
For to get and haue the Rose

Which maketh the so mate and wood
That thou desyrest none other good
But thou art not an yuche the nerre
But euer abydest in sorow and werre
As in thy face it is sene
It maketh the bothe pale and lene
Thy might, thy vertue gothe away
A sory gest in good fay
Thou herbogest in thyne inne
The god of Loue whan thou let inne
Wherefore I rede thou shette him oute
Or he shal greue the out of doute
For to thy profyte it wol turne
If he no more with the solourne
In great mischefe and sorow sonken
Ben hertes, that of loue arne dronken
As thou peraventure knowen shall
Whan thou hast lost the tyme all
And spent by thought in ydelnesse
In waste, and wofull lustynesse
Yf thou mayst lyue the tyme to se
Of loue for to delyuered be
Thy tyme thou shalt bewepe sore
The which neuer thou mayst restore
For tyme lost, as men may se
For nothynge may recouered be
And if thou scape, yet at laste
Fro loue that hath the so faste
Knytte and bounden in his lace
Certayne I holde it but a grace
For many one as it is seyne
Haue lost, and spent also in veyne
In his seruice without socour
Body and soule, good, and treasour
Wytte, and strength, and eke ryches
Of whiche they had neuer redresse.

¶ Lamant.

Thus taught & preched hath Reson
But Loue spylte her sermon
That was so imped in my thought
That her doctrine I set at nought
And yet ne sayde she neuer a dele
That I ne vnderstode it wele
Worde by worde the mater all
But vnto Loue I was so thrall
Whiche calleth ouer al his prayere
Me chasteth so my thought aye
And holdeth myne herte vnder his fete
As trusty and trewe as any stele
So that no deuocion
Me had I in the sermon
Of dame Reson, ne of her rede
It toke no solour in myne herde
For all yede out at one ere
That in that other she did lere
Fully on me she lost her loze
Her speche me greued wonder sore.

That vnto her for ire I saide
For anger, as I dyd abrayde
Dame, and is it your wyll algate
That I not loue, but that I hate
All men, as ye me techa
For if I do after your speche
Sithe that you seyne Loue is not good
Than must I nedes say with mode
Yf I it lene, in hatred aye
Lyuen, and voyde loue awaye
From me a synful wrecche
Hated of al that techa
I may not go none other gate
For eyther must I loue or hate
And if I hate men of newe
More than loue, it wol me rewe
As by your preching semeth me
For Loue nothyng ne prayseth the
Ye yeue good counsayle sykerly
That precheth me al day, that I
Shulde not loues lore alowe
He were a foole wolde you not trowe
In speche also ye han me taught
Another loue that knowen is naught
Which I haue herde you not repreue
To loue eche other by your leue
If ye wold diffine it me
I wolde gladly here to se
At the leest if I may lere
Of sondry loues the manere.

¶ Raison.

Certes frende, a foole art thou
Whan that thou nothyng wolt alow
That I for thy profyte saye
Yet wol I saye the more in saye
For I am redy at the leest
To accomplysshe thy request
But I not where it wol auayle
In bayne paraventure I shall trauayle
Loue there is in sondrye wyse
As I shall the here deuyse
For some loue lefful is and goode
I meane not that which maketh ỹ woode

And

And dyngeth the in many a fyte
And rauysheth fro the al thy wyte
It is so marueylous and queynt
With suche loue be no more aqueynt.

¶ Cõment Raison diffinit Iunkete.

HOue of frendshippe also there is
Whiche maketh no man don amis
Of wyl knitte betwixte two
That wol not byde for wele ne wo
Whiche long is lykely to continue
When wyl and goodes ben in cõmune
Grounded by goddes ordynaunce
Voyde without discordaunce
With hem holdynge commaunes
Of al her good in charyte
That there be none exceptioun
Through chaungyng of entencioun
That eche helpe other at her nede
And wisely hele both worde and dede
Trewe of meanyng, deuoyde of slouthe
For wyt is nought without trouthe
But that the tonge dare al his thought
Sayne to his frende, and spare nought
As to him selfe without dredyng
To be discouered by wreying
For glad is that conjuncioun
When there is none suspeccioun
Whome they wolde proue
That trewe and perfyte weren in loue
For no man may be amyable
But if he be so ferme and stable
That fortune chaunge him not ne blynde
But that his frende alway him fynde
Bothe pore and riche in o state
For if his frende through any gate
Wol complayne of his pouerte
He shulde not byde so longe, tyl he
Of his helpynge him requyre
For good dede done throughe prayere
Is solde and bought to dere ywis
To hem that of great valure is
For hem fulfylled of gentylnesse
Can wyell demeane his distresse
And man that worthy is of name
To asterne often hath great shame
A good man bremeth in his thought
For shame when he asketh ought
He hath great thought, and dredeth aye
For his distrate when he shal praye
His frende, lest that he warned be
Tyl that he preue his stabilite
But when that he hath founden one
That trusty is and trewe as stone
And assayed him at al
And founde him stedfast as a wal
And of his frendshyppe be certayne
He shal him shewe, both ioye and payne
And al that dare thynke or saye
Without shame, as he wel maye
For how shuld he ashamed be
Of suche one as I tolde the
For when he wot his secret thought
The thirde shal know therof right nought
For twey in nombre it bet than thre
In euery counsayle and secree
Repreue he dredeth neuer a dele
Who that beset his wordes wele
For euery wise man out of drede
Can kepe his tong tyl he se nede
And fooles can not holde her tonge
A fooles belle is soone ronge
Yet shal a trewe frende do more
To helpe his felowe of his sore
And socour him when he hath nede
In all that he may done in dede
And gladder that he him pleaseth
Than his felowe that he easeth
And if he do nat his requeste
He shal as muche him moleste
As his felowe, for that he
Maye not fulfyl his volunte
Fully, as he hath required
If bothe the hertes loue hath fyred
Ioye and wo they shal departe
And take euenly eche his parte
Halfe his anoye he shal haue aye
And comforte what that he maye
And of this blysse parte shal he
If Loue wol departed be.

AND whilom of this suite
Spake Tullius in a byte
And thulde maken his requeste
Vnto his frende, that is honeste
And he goodly thulde it fulfyll
But it the more were out of skyll
And otherwyse not graunt therto
Except only in causes two
Yf men his frende to dethe wolde dryue
Let him be besy to saue his lyue
Also if men wollen him assayle
Of his worshyp to make him fayle
And hynderen him of his renoun

Let him with hit entreteyne
His bonet done in eche degre
That his frende ne shamed be
In this two case with his might
Takyng no kepe to skyll nor right
As ferre as Loue may him excuse
This ought no man to refuse
This Loue that I haue tolde to the
Is nothyng contrarye to me
This wol I that thou folowe wele
And leue the tother euery dele
This Loue to vertue al entendeth
The tother fooles blent and shendeth

Another Loue also there is
That is contrary vnto this
Whiche delyte is so constrayned
That is but wyl fayned
Away fro trouthe it doth so varye
That to good loue it is contrarye
For it mayneth in many wyse
Lyke hertes with couetyse
All in wynnyng and in profyte
Suche loue setteth his delyte
This loue so hangeth in balaunce
That if it lese his hope parchaunce
Of lucre, that he is set vpon
It wol fayle, and quenche anon
For no man maye be amorous
Ne in his lyuing vertuous
But he loue more in moode
Wen for hem self, than for her goode
For loue that profyte doth abyde
Is false, and bydeth not in no tyde
Loue cometh of dame Fortune
That lytel whyle wol contune
For it shal chaungen wonders soone
And take eclyps as the moone
Whan he is from vs let
Through erth, that betwyxt is set
The sonne and her, as it may fall
Be it in partie, or in all
The shadowe maketh her bemes merke
And her hornes to shewe derke
That part, where she hath lost her lyght
Of Phebus fully, and the syght
Tyll whan the shadowe is ouerpaste
She is enlumyned ageyn as faste
Through the brightnes of ỳ sonne bemes
That roueth to her agayne her lemes
That loue is right of such nature
Now is fayre, and nowe obscure
Nowe bright, nowe cloudy of manere
And whilom dymme, as tokeneth cleere
As soone as powere gynneth take
With mantel and wederes blake
Hydeth of loue the lyght away
That into nyght it tourneth day
It may nor se richesse shyne
Tyll the blacke shadowes fyne
For whan richesse shyneth bryght
Loue recouereth ayen his lyght
And whan it fayleth, he wol flyt
And as she gresteth, so greueth it
Of this loue here what I saye
The riche men are loued aye
And namely tho that sparan de bene
That wol not waste her heritage clene
Of the fyrth, nor of the fyre
Of gredy byenyng auarice
The riche man ful fonde is ywis
That weneth that he loued is
If that his herte it vnderstode
It is not he, it is his goode
He may wel weten in his thought
His good is loued, and he right nought
For if he be a nygarde eke
Men wol not set by him a leke
But haten him, this is the sothe
Lo what profyte his catel dothe
Of euery man that may him se
It getteth him nought but enmyte
But he amende him selfe of that vice
And know him selfe, he is not wise
Certes he shulde aye fendly be
To get him loue also ben fre
Or els he is not wise ne sage
No more than is a gote ramage
That he not loueth, his dede proueth
Whan he his richesse so wel loueth
That he wol hyde it aye and spare
His poze frendes sene fayre
To kepen aye his purpose
Tyl for drede his eyen close
And tyl a wycked deth him take
Hym had leuer a sondre shake
And let al his hymmes a sondre ryue
Than leaue his richesse in his lyue
He thynketh to part it with no man
Certayne no loue is in him than
Howr shuld loue within him be
Whan in his herte is no pyte
That he respaseth wel I wate
For eche man knoweth his estate
For wel him ought to be repzoued
That loueth nought, ne is not loued

But

But sythe we arne to fortune comen
And hath our fremdon of her nomen
I wonder wyl I tel the nowe
Thoughtedest neuer suche one I trowe
I not where thou me leuen shall
Though sothfastnesse it be all
But it is writtten, and is sothe
That vnto men more profyte dothe
The frowarde fortune and contrarie
Than the swote and debonaire
And yf the thynke it is doutable
It is through argument prouable
For the debonayre and softe
Faileth and begyleth ofte
For lyche a mother she can cherysshe
And myken as dothe a norryce
And of her good to hym deles
And yeueth him parte of her iowelys
With great ryches and dignite
And hem she noteth stabylite
In stater that is not stable
But chaungyng aye and variable
And feedeth hym with glory veyne
And worldely blysse none certeyne
Whan she hym setteth on her whele
Than wene they to be ryghe wele
And in so stable state withal
That neuer they wene for to fal
And whan they sette so hygh to be
They wene to haue in certaynte
Of hertely frendes to great nombre
That nothyng myght her state encombre
They truste hem so on euery syde
Weenyng with hym they wolde abyde
In euery paryl and mischaunce
Without chaunce or daryaunce
Bothe of catel and of good
And also for to spende her blood
And al her membres for to spyll
Onely to fulfyll her wyll
They maken it hole in many wyse
And hoten hem her ful seruyce
Howe sore that it do hem smerte
Into her very naked herte
Herte and al so hole they yeue
For the tyme that they may lyue
So that with her flaterie
They maken fooles glorifye
Of her worldes spekyng
And han chere of a reioysyng
And trowe hem as the Euangyle
And it is al falshede and gyle
As they shal afterwarde se
Whan they arne fal in pouerte
And den of good and catel bare
Than shulde they sene who frendes ware
For of an hundred certaynly
Nor of a thousande ful scarsly
Ne shal they fynde vnnethes one
Whan pouerte is comen vpon
For thus Fortune that I of tell
With men whan her luste to dwell
Maketh hem to lese her conysaunce
And norysheth hem in ignoraunce

But frowarde Fortune and peruerse
Whan hygh estates she doth reuerse
And maketh hem to tumble doune
Of her whele with sodayne tourne
And from her rychesse dothe hem flye
And plongeth hym in pouerte
As a stepmother enuyous
And layeth a playster dolorous
Unto her hertes woumded egre
Whiche is not tempered with vinegre
But with pouerte and indigence
For to shewe by experience
That she is Fortune verely
In whom no man shulde affye
Nor in her yeftes haue fyaunce
She is so ful of daryaunce
Thus can she maken hye and lowe
Whan they from rychesse arne throwe
Fully to knowen without were
Frende of affecte, and frende of chere
And whiche in loue weren trewe & stable
And whiche also weren daryable
After Fortune her goddesse
In pouerte, either in rychesse
For al that yeueth here out of drede
Unhappe beareth it in dede
For in Fortune lette not one
Of frendes, whan fortune is gone
I meane tho frendes that wol flee
Inone as entreth pouerte
And yet they wol not leaue hem so
But in eche place where they go
They call hem wrecche, scrorne, & blame
And of her mishappe hem diffame
And namely suche as in rychesse
Pretenderh moste of stableneesse
Whan that they sawe hym set on lofte
And weren of hem socoured ofte
And moste yholpe in all her nede
But nowe they take no maner hede
But seyne in voyce of flaterye

That nowe appereth her faire
Ouer al wher so they fare
And synge, go farewel feire fare
Al suche frendes I bethrewe
For of trewe there be to fewe
But sothfast frendes, what so betyde
In euery fortune wollen abyde
They han her hertes in suche noblesse
That they nyl loue for no richesse
Nor for that fortune may hem fynde
They wollen hem socour and defende
And chaunge for sorte ne for fore
For who hys frende loueth euermore
Though men dyawe swerde hys to slo
He may not hewe her loue a two
But in case that I shal say
For pryde and recheles it be may
And for reproue by myerte
And discoueryng of pryuite
Or ith tonge woundyng, as frion
Through venemous detraction
Frende in this case wol gon hys way
For nothyng greue hym more ne may
And for nought eis wol he fle
If that he loue in stabylyte
And certayne he is well begone
Amonge a thousande that fynden one
For there may be no richesse
Ayenst frendshyp of worthynesse
For it ne may so high attayne
As may the valoure, sothe to sayne
Of hym that loueth trewe and well
Frendshyp is more than is catell
For frende in courte aye better is
Than peny in purse certis
And fortune mishapyng
Whan upon men she is fallyng
Through misturnyng of her chaunce
And cast hem out of balaunce
She maketh through her aduersite
Men ful cleerly for to se
Hym that is frende in existence
From hym that is by apparence
For in fortune maketh assone
To knowe thy frendes fro thy fone
By experience right as it is
The whiche is more to prayse ywis
Than in muche richesse and tresoure
For more hope profyte and valoure
Pouerte, and suche aduersite
Before, than bothe prosperite
For that one geueth comfaunce
And the tother ignorance,
And thus in pourete is in dede
Trouthe declared ful sikerlyche
For sayne frendes it wol declare
And trewe also, what way they fare
For whan he was in hys richesse
These frendes ful of doublenesse
Offred hym in many wyse
Herte and body, and seruyce
What wold he that more you to haue bowe
To knowen openly her thought
That he nowe hath se clerely sene
The lasse begrieth he shulde haue bene
And he had than perceyued it
But richesse nolde not let hym wyt
Wel more auauntage bothe him than
Hyrthe that it maketh hym a wyse man
The great mischefe that he perceyueth
Than bothe richesse that him deceyueth
Richesse richenesse maketh nought
Hym that on treasour sette his thought
For richesse stonte in suffysaunce
And nothyng in habundaunce
For suffysaunce al onely
Maketh menne to lyue richely.

For he that hath myrthes twenty
Ne value in hys demeyne
Lyueth more at ease, & more is riche
Than bothe he that is chiche
And in his barne hath soth to sayne
An hundred mauis of rotherte graine
Though he be chapman or marchaunt
And haue of golde many besaunt
For in the getryng he hath suche wo
And in the kepyng drede also
And sette euer more his besynesse
For to encrease, and nat to lesse
For to augment and multiplye
And though on heapes that lye him by,
Yet neuer shal make hir richesse
Suffyse vnto hys gredynesse
But the poore that reccheth nought
Saue of hys lyuelode in his thought
Whiche that he getteth with hys trauayle
He dredeth nought that it shal fayle
Though he haue lytel worldes goode
Meate and drynke, and esely foode
Upon hys trauayle and lyuyng
And also suffysaunt clothyng
Or if in sickenes that he fal
And lothe meate and drynke withal
Though he haue not his meate to bye
He shal bethynke hym haskelye

To put hym out of al daungere
That he of meate hath no myſtere
Or that he may with lytel eke
Be founden, whyle that he is ſeke
Or that men ſhul hym berne in haſte
To lyue tyll hys ſickeneſſe be paſte
To ſome Mayſondewe beſyde
He caſte nought what ſhal hym betyde
He thynketh nought that euer he ſhall
In to any ſyckeneſſe fall.

Although it fal, as it may be
That al be tyme ſpare ſhal he
As mokel as ſhal to him ſuffyce
Whyle he is ſicke in any wyſe
He dothe for that he wol be
Content with hys pouerte
Without nede of any manne
So muche in lytel haue he canne
He is a payde with hys fortune
And for he nyl be inportune
Vnto no wyght, ne onerous
Nor of her goodeſſe couetous
Therfore he ſpareth, it may wel bene
Hys poore eſtate for to ſuſtene.

Or if him laſte not for to (ſpare
But ſuffreth forth, as nat ye (ware
It laſt it happeneth, as it may
Ryght vnto hys laſte day
And take the worlde as it wolde be
For euer in herte thynketh he
The ſoner that dethe hym ſlo
To paradyſe the ſooner go
He hal, there for to lyue in blyſſe
Where that he ſhal no good myſſe
Thyder he hopeth god ſhal hym ſende
After thys wretched lyues ende
Pythagoras hym ſelfe reherſes
In a boke that the golde verſes
Is deped, for the nobilyte
Of the honorable dyte
Than whan thou goeſt thy body fro
Free in the heyre thou ſhalt vp go
And leauen al humanyte
And purely lyue in diete
He is a foole withouten were
That troweth haue hys countrey here
In erthe is not our countre
That may theſe clerkes ſeyne and ſe
In boece of conſolacion
Where it is maked mencyon
Of our contre playne at the eye
By teachynge of philoſophye
Where leude men myght lere wit
Who ſo that wolde tranſlaten it
If he be ſuche that can wel lyue
After hys rent, may hym yeue
And not deſyreth more to haue
Than may fro pouerte hym ſaue
A wyſe man ſayde, as we may ſene
Is no man wretched, but he it wene
Be he kynge, knyght, or ribaude
And many a rybaud is merry and baude
That ſwinketh, & beteth bothe day & nyzt
Many a burthen of great myght
The whiche dothe hym laſſe offence
For he ſuffreth in pacience
They laugh & daunce, tryppe and ſyng
And lay nought vp for her lyuyng
But in the taueme al diſpendeth
The wynnyng that god hem ſendeth
Than goeth he fardels for to bere
With as good chere as he dyd ere
To ſwinke & trauayle he not fayneth
For to robben he diſdayneth
But ryght anon, after hys ſwynke
He gothe to taueme for to drynke
Al theſe are ryche in haboundaunce
That can thus haue ſuffyſaunce
Wel more than can an vſurere
As god wel knoweth, without were
For an vſurer, ſo god me ſe
Shal neuer for rycheſſe ryche be
But euer more poore and indigent
Scarce and gredy in hys entent.

For ſothe it is, whom it diſpleaſe
There may no marchaunt lyue at eaſe
Hys here in ſuche a where is ſette
That it quicke brenneth to gette
Ne neuer ſhal, though he hath geten
Thoughe he haue golde in garnetz yeten
For to be redy he dredeth ſore
Wherfore to getten more and more
He ſet hys hert and hys deſyre
So hote he brenneth in the fyre
Of couetyſe that maketh hym wood
To purchace other mennes good
He vnderfongeth a great payne
That vndertaketh to drynke vp Sayne
For the more he drynketh aye
The more he leaueth, the ſothe to ſaye
Thus is thruſt of falſe getteyng
That laſte euer in couetyng
And the anguyſhe and diſtreſſe

With

Wyth the fyre of gredyneſſe
She fyghteth with hym aye, and ſtriueth
That his herte a ſonder ryueth
Suche gredyneſſe hym aſſayleth
That whā he moſt hath, moſte he fayleth
Phiſiciens, and aduocates
Gone ryght by the ſame yates
They ſel her ſcience for wynnyng
And haunte her craft for great gettyng
Her wynnyng is of ſuche ſweteneſſe
That if a man fal in ſickeneſſe
They are ful glad, for her encreſe
For by her wyl, without ieſe
Euerych man ſhulde be ſeke
And though they dye, they ſet nat a leke
After whan they the golde haue take
Ful lytel care for hem they make
They wold that fourty were ſicke at ones
Ye two hundred, in fleſhe and bones
And yet two thouſande, as I geſſe
For to encreſen her rycheſſe
They wol not worchen in no wyſe
But for lucre and couetyſe
For phiſicke gyneth firſt by (phy)
The phiſicien alſo ſothely
And ſythen it goth fro fye to fye
To truſte on hem it is folye
For they nyl in no maner gre
Do right nought for charyte
Eke in the ſame ſecte are ſette
Al tho that prechen for to gette
Worſhyps, honour, and rycheſſe
Her hertes arne in great diſtreſſe
That folke lyue not holyly
But abouen al ſpecially
Suche as prechen beyngloyre
And towarde god haue no memoyre
But forthcas ypocrites trace
And to her ſoules bethe purchace
And outwarde chewyng holyneſſe
Though they be ful of curſednеſſe
Nat lyche to the apoſtels twelue
They deceyue other and hem ſelue
Begyled is the gyler than
For preachyng of a curſed man
Though to other may profyte
Himſelfe it auayleth not a myte
For ofte good predicacioun
Cometh of euyl entencyoun
To hym nat vayleth hys prechyng
Al helpe he other with hys teachyng
For where they good example take
There is he with beyngloyre ſhake

But let vs leuen theſe prechours
And ſpeke of hem that in her tours
Heape vp her golde, and faſt therre
And ſore theron her herte ſette
They neither loue god ne drede
They kepe more than it is nede
And in her bagges fore it bynde
Out of the ſonne, and of the wynde
They put vp more than nede ware
Whan they ſene poore folke forfare
For hungre dye, and for colde quake
God can wel vengeaunce therof take
The great miſcheues hem aſſayleth
And thus in gadryng aye trauayleth
With muche payne they wynne richeſſe
And dredе hem holdeth in diſtreſſe
To kepe that they gather faſt
With ſorowe they leaue it at the laſt
With ſorowe they bothe dye and lyue
That vnto ryches her hertes yeue
And in defaut of loue it is
As it the werth ful wel ywis
For yf theſe gerdy, the ſothe to ſayne
Loueden, and were loved agayne
And good loue reigned ouer al
Suche wickednеſſe ne ſhulde fal
But he ſhulde yeue, that moſt good had
To hem that were in nede beſtad
And lyue without falſe vſure
For charyte, ful clene and pure
If they hem yeue to goodneſſe
Refrendyng hem from idelneſſe
In al thys worlde than nore none
Ne ſhulde fynde I trowe not one
But chaunged is thys worlde vnſtable
For loue is ouer al vendable
We ſe that no man loueth nowe
But for wynnyng and for prowe
And loue is thralled in ſeruage
Whan it is ſolde for auauntage
Yet women wol her bodyes ſel
Suche ſoules goth to the deuyl of hel.

Whan Loue had tolde hem hys entent
The baronage to counſayle went
In many ſentences they fyl
And diuerſly they ſayde her wyl
But after diſcorde they accorded
And her accorde to Loue recorded
Sir ſayden they, we ben at one
By euen accorde of euerychone
Out take Rycheſſe al onely
That ſworne hath ful hauteynly

That

That he the castel nyl not assayle
Ne smite a stroke in thys batayle
With darte ne mace, speare, ne knyfe
For man that speketh, or bereth the lyfe
And blameth your empryse ywis
And from our hoste departed is
In ierll way, as in this plyte
So hath he this man in dispyte
For he sayth he ne loued her neuer
And therfore she wol hate hym euer
For he wol gather no tresore
He hath her wrathe for euermore
He agylte her neuer in other caas
Lo here al holly hys trespas
She sayth wel, that this other day
He asked her leaue to gone the way
That is cleped to muche peuyng
And spake ful fayre in hys prayeng
But whan he prayed her, poore was he
Therfore she warned hym the entre
Neyer is he not thryuen so
That he hath gotten a peny or two
That outrely is hys owne in holde
Thus hath Rychesse vs al tolde
And whan Rychesse vs this treoryed
Without her we ben acoryed.

And we fynde in our acordaunce
That false Semblant and Abstynaunce
With al the folke of her batayle
Shul at the hynder gate assayle
That wicked tonge hath in kepyng
With hys Normans ful of iangling
And with hem Curtesye and Largesse
That shul shewe her hardynesse
To the olde wyfe that kepte so harde
Fayre welcomyng within her warde
Than shal Delyte and wel helyng
Fonde, Shame adowne to bryng
With al her hoofle early and late
They shull assayten that like gate
Agayns Dyede shal Hardynesse
Assayle, and also Sykernesse
With al the folke of her leadyng
That neuer wyste what was fleyng.

Fraunchise shall fyght and eke Pyte
With Daunger full of cruelte
Thus is your hoste ordayned wele
Downe shal the Castel euery dele
If euerych do hys entent
So that Venus be present
Your mother ful of beselage
That can ynough of suche vsage
Without her may no wight spede
This werke, neither for wordes ne dede
Therfore is good ye for her sende
For thrugh her may this worke amende

Dyces my mother þ goddes
That is my lady, & my maistres
Nis nat al at my wyllyng
Ne doth nat al my desyryng.
Yet can she sometyme done labour
Whan that her luste in my socour
As my nede is for to atheue
But nowe I thynke her nat to greue
My mother is she, and of childehede
I bothe wurshyp her, and eke drede
For who that drederh sire ne dame
Shal it abye in body or name
And natheles, yet conne we
Sende after her if nede be
And were she nygh she cõmen wolde
I trowe that nothyng might her holde

My mother is of great prowesse
She hath tane many a fortresse
That cost hath many a pounde er this
There I nas not present ywis
And yet men sayde it was my dede
But I come neuer in that stede
Ne me ne lyketh so mote I the
That suche tours ben take with me
For why? Me thynketh that in no wyse
It may be cleped but marchaundyse.

Go bye a courser blacke or white
And pay therfore, thã art thou quite
The marchaunt oweth the right nought
Ne thou hym whan thou it bought
I wol not sellyng clepe yeuing
For sellyng asketh no guerdonyng
Here lythe no thanke, ne no merytе
That one goth from that other al quite
But thys sellyng is not semblable
For whan his horse is in the stable
He may it selle agayne parde
And wynnen on it, suche happe may be
Al may the manne nat lese ywis
For at the leest the skynne is his
Or els, if it so betyde
That he wol kepe his horse to ryde
Yet is he lorde aye of hys horse
But thylke chaffare is wel worse

There

There Venus entremeteth ought
For who so suche chaffare hath bought
He shal not wrechen so wysely
That he ne shal lese al vtterly
Bothe hys money, and hys chaffare
But the seller of the ware
The prise and profyte haue shal
Certayne the byer shal lese al
For he ne canne so dere it bye
To haue lordshyp, and ful maistrye
Ne haue power to make letyng
Neither for yefte ne for preachyng
That of his chaffare maugre his
Another shal haue as muche ywis
If he wol yeue as muche as he
Of what countrey so that he be
Or for right nought so happe may
If he canne flatter her to her pay
Bene than suche marchaunтes wise
No, but fooles in euery wyse
Whan they bye suche thyng wylfully
There as they lese her good folyly
But natheleisse, thys dare I say
My mother is not wonte to pay
For she is neither so foole ne nyce
To entremete her of suche byce
But trust wel, he shal pay al
That repent of hys bargayne shal
Whan pouerte put hym in distresse
Al were he scoler to Rychesse
That is for me in great penuyng
Whan she assenteth to my wyllyng.

But my mother sayne Venus
And by her father Saturnus
That her engendred by hys lyste
But nat vpon his wedded wyfe
Yet wol I more vnto you swere
To make this thyng the surere
Nowe by that fayth, and that beaute
That I owe to al my brethren free
Of whiche there nys wyght vnder heuyn
That canne her fathers names neuyn
So dyuers and so many there be
That with my mother haue be pryue
Yet wol I swere for sickernesse
The Pole of helle to my witnesse
Nowe drynke I not thys vere clarre
If that I lye, or forswore be
For of the goddes the vsage is
That who so hym forswereth amis
Shal that vere drynke no clarre
Nowe haue I swore ynough parde
If I forswere me than am I lorne
But I wol neuer be forsworne
Sithe Rychesse hath me sayled here
She shal abye that trespas ful dere
At lest way but her harme
With swerde, or sparth, or gysarme
For certes sythe she louyth not me
Fro thylke tyme that she may se
The castel and the tour to shake
In sorye tyme she shal awake
If I may grype a tyche manne
I shal so pulle hym, if I canne
That he shal in a fewe stounde
Lese al his markes, and his poundes
I shal hym make his pens out flyng
But they in hys garnet sprynge
Our maydens shal the plucke hym so
That hym shal neden fethers mo
And make hym selle his londe to spende
But he the bette conne hym defende.

Poore men han made her lorde of me
Although they nat so mighty be
That they may fede me in delyte
I wol not haue hem in dispyte
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse
For chynche and felonie is Richesse
That so canne chase hem and despise
And hem defoule in sondrye wise
They louen ful bette, so god me spede
Than dothe the ryche chynchy grede
And bene (in good fayth) more stable
And trewer, and more seruyable
And therfore it suffyseth me
Her good herte, and her beaute
They han on me set al her thought
And therfore I forgete hem nought
I wol hem bringe in great noblesse
If that I were god of Rychesse
As I am god of Loue forthely
Suche ruthe vpon her playnt haue I
Therfore I must his socour be
That payneth hym to serue me
For yf he deyed for loue of this
Than semeth in me no loue there is

Sir sayde they, sothe is euery dele
That ye reherce, and we wote wele
Thylke othe to holde is reasonable
For it is good and conenable
That ye on ryche men han swore
For sir, this wote we wel before
If ryche men done you homage

That

That is as fooles done outrage
But ye shul not forswone be
Ne let therfore to drinke clarry
Or pyment maked freshe and newe
Ladyes shul hem suche pepyr brewe
Yf that they fall in to her laas
That they for wo mowe sayne alas
Ladyes shullen euer so curteys be
That they shal quite your othe all free
Ne seketh neuer other bycayze
For they shal speake with him so fayre
That ye shal holde you payde ful wele
Though ye you medle neuer a dele
Let ladyes worche with her thynges
They shal hem tel so fele tydynges
And moue hem eke so many requestes
By flattery, that not honest is
And therto yeue hem suche thankynges
What with kyssyng, and with talkynges
That certes if they crowed be
Shal neuer leaue hem londe ne fee
That it nyl as the mocble fare
Of whiche they first delyuered are
Nowe may you tel vs all your wyll
And we your hestes shal fulfyll.

But false Semblant dare not for drede
Of you sir, medle him of this dede
For he sayth, that ye ben his fo
Ne not, yf ye wol worche him wo
Wherfore we praye you al beaufire
That ye forgeue him nowe your ire
And that he may dwel as your man
Ryth stedfastnesse his dere lemman
This our acorde and our wyl nowe
Parfey sayd Loue, I graunt it you
I wol wel holde him for my man
Now let him come, and he forth ran
False Semblant (qd Loue) in thys wyse
I take the here to my seruyce
That thou our frendes helpe alway
And hyndrest hem neyther nyght ne day
But do thy myght hem to releue
And eke our enemyes that thou greue
Thyne be this might, I graunt it the
Yet kyng of harlotes shalt thou be
Ne wot that thou hane suche honour
Certayne thou arte a false traytour
And eke a thefe, Sithe thou were borne
A thousande tymes thou art forsworne
But natheleste in our herying
To put our folke out of doutyng
I byd the teche hem, wost thou howe
By some general signe nowe
In what place thou shalt founden be
Yf that men had myster of the
And howe men shal the best espye
For the to knowe is great maistrye
Tell in what place is thine hauntyng
Sir I haue ful dyuers woonyng
That I kepe not rehersed be
So that ye wolde respyten me
For if that I tell you the sothe
I may haue harme and shame bothe
Yf that my felowes wysten it
Myn tales shulden me be quit
For certayne they wolde hate me
Yf euer I knewe her cruelte
For they wolde ouer al holde hem styll
Of trouthe, that is agayne her wyll
Suche tales kepen they not here
I myght eftesone bye it ful dere
Yf I sayde of hem any thyng
That ought displeaseth to her herying
For what worde that hem pricketh or byteth
In that worde none of hem delyteth
Al were it gospel the euangyle
That wolde reproue hem of her gyle
For they are cruel and hautayne
And thys thynge wote I wel certayne
Yf I speake ought to payze her loos
Your courte shal not so wel be cloos
That they ne shall wyte it at laste
Of good men am I nought agaste
For they wol taken on hem nothyng
Whan that they know al my meanyng
But he that wol it on him take
He wol him selfe suspecyous make
That he his lyfe let couertly
In gyle and in Ypocrisy
That me engendred and yaue fostryng
They made a ful good engendryng
(Quod Loue) for who so sothly tell
They engendred the dyuel of hell.

But nedely, how so euer it be
(Quod Loue) I wyl and charge the
To tel anon thy woonyng places
Herying eche wight that in this place is
And what lyfe thou lyuest also
Hyde it no lenger nowe, wherto.
Thou must discouer al thy wurchyng
How thou seruest, and of what thyng
Though that thou shuldest for thy sothsawe
Bene alto beaten and to drawe
And yet art thou not wont parde

But natheleſſe, though thou beten be
Thou ſhalt not be the firſt that ſo
Hath for forthſawe ſuffred wo.

Sir, ſythe that it may lyken you
Though that I ſhulde be ſlayne right nowe
I ſhal done your commaundement
For therto haue I great talent.

Withouten wordes mo, right than
Falſe Semblant his ſermon began
And ſaid hem thus in audyence
Barons, take hede of my ſentence
That wight that lyſt to haue knowyng
Of falſe Semblant, full of flateryng
He muſte in worldly folke him ſeke
And certes in the cloyſters eke
I won no where, but in hem twey
But not lyke euen, ſothe to ſay
Shorteely I wol herberowe me
There I hope beſt to hulſtred be
And certaynly, ſykereſt hydyng
Is vnderneth bumbleſt clothyng
Relygyous folke bene ful couerte
Seculer folke bene more apperte
But natheleſſe, I wol not blame
Relygyous folke, ne hem diffame
In what habyte that euer they go
Relygyon humble, and trewe alſo
Will I not blame, ne diſpyſe
But I nyl loue it in no wyſe
I meane of falſe relygious
That floure den, and malycyous
That wollen in an habyte go
And feinten not her herte therto.

Relygious folke ben al pytous
Thou ſhalte not ſene one diſpytous
They louen no pryde, ne no ſtryfe
But humbly they wol lede her lyfe
With whiche folke wol I neuer be
And yf I dwell, I fayne me
I maye well in her habyte go
But me were leuer my necke a two
Than leſte a purpoſe that I take
What couenaunt that euer I make
I dwell with hem that proude be
And ful of wyles and ſubtelte
That worſhyp of this worlde couryten
And great nede connen explayten
And gon and gadren great pyrauncys
And purchace hem the acquerntaunces
Of men that mighty lyfe may leden
And fayne hem poore, and hem ſelfe feden
With good morſeis delycious
And drinken good wyne precyous
And preche vs pouert and diſtreſſe
And fyſſhen hem ſelfe great rycheſſe
With wyly nettes, that they caſte
It wol come foule out at the laſte
They ben fro clene religion wente
They make the worlde an argumente
That hath a foule concluſyon
I haue a robe of religyon
Than am I all religyous
This argument is all roignous
It is not worthe a croked bjere
Habyte ne maketh neyther monke ne frere
But clene lyfe and deuocion
Maketh good men of relygyon
Natheleſſe, there can none anſwere
Howe hygh that euer his herd be ſhere
With raſour whetted neuer ſo kene
That gyle in braunches eutte thurtene
There can no wight diſcryue it ſo
That he darr ſay a worde therto.
But what herberowe that euer I take
Or what ſemblant that euer I make
I meane but gyle, and ſolowe that
For ryght no more than gybbe our cat
(That awayteth myce & ratteſ to kyllen)
Ne entende I but to begylen
Ne no wight may, by my clothynge
Were with what folke is my dwellynge
Ne by my wordes yet pardé
So ſokre and ſo pleſaunt they be
Beholde the bedes that I bo
But thou be blynde thou ought eſt ſo
For varye ber wordes fro her dede
They thynke on gyle without drede
What maner clothyng that they were
Or what eſtate that euer they bere
Lered or leude, lorde or lady
Knyght, ſquyer, burgeys, or bayly.

Right thus whyle falſe Semblãt ſermoneth
Eſtre ſones Loue him areſoureth
And brake his tale in his ſpeakyng
As though he had him tolde leaſyng
And ſaid: What dyuel is that I here?
What folke haſte thou vs nempned here?
Maye men fynde religioun
In worldly habytacioun?
Ye ſir, it foloweth nat that they
Shulde leade a wicked lyfe parfey
Ne not therfore her ſoules leſe

That

That hem to worldly clothes cheſe
For certes it were great pyte
Men may in ſeculer clothes ſe
Florithen holy relygioun
Ful many a ſaint in felde and towne
With many a virgyn glorious
Deuoute, and ful relygious
Pan dyed, that commen clothe aye beren
Yet ſayntes neuertheleſſe they weren
I coude reckon you many a ten
Be welnygh al theſe holy women
That men in churches herry and ſeke
Bothe maydens, and theſe wynes eke
That baren ful many a fayre childe here
Wearyd alway clothes ſeculere
And in the ſame dyden they
That ſaintes weren, and ben alway.
¶ The .ii. thouſande maydens dere
That beren in heuen her cierges clere
Of whiche men rede in churche and ſyng
Were take in ſeculer clothyng
When they receyued marryedome
And women heuen vnto her home
Good herte maketh the good thought
The clothynge reueth ne reueth nought
The good thought and the worchyng
That maketh the relygion flouryng
There lyeth the good relygioun
After the ryghte entencioun.

Who ſo toke a wethers ſkynne
And wrapped a gredy wolfe therinne
For he ſhuld go with lambes white
Weneſt thou not he wolde hem byte?
Yes: Neuertheleſſe, as he were wode
He wold hem wirry, and drinke the blode
And wel the rather hem diſceyue
For ſithe they coude nat perceyue
His tregetre, and his crueltè
They wold him folowe al tho he flye.

If there be wolues of ſuche hewe
Amonges theſe apoſtles newe
Thou holy churche it marſte be wayled
Sythe that thy eyre is aſſayled
Through knyghtes of thyne owne table
God wot thy lordſchyp is doutable.
If they enforce it to win
That ſhulde defende it fro within
Who might defence ayenſt hem make
Without ſtroke it more be take
Of treperget or mangonel
Without diſplayeng of penſel
And if god nyl done it ſocour
But let renne in this colour.
Thou muſt thy herſtes letten be
Than is there nought, but yelde the
Or yeue him trybute doutles
And holde it of hem to haue pees
But greater harme betyde the
That they al maiſter of it be
Wel con they ſtryne the withall
By day ſtuffen they the wall
And al the nyght they myxen there
Nay, thou planten muſte elſ where
Thyne ympes, if thou wolt frute haue
Abyde not there thy ſelfe to ſaue.

But now peace, here I turne agayne
I wol no more of this thinge fayne
Yf I may paſſen me herreby
I might maken you wery
But I wol hetten you alway
To helpe your frendes what I may
So they wollen my company
For they be ſhent al vtterly
But if ſo fal, that I be
Ofte with hem, and they with me
And eke my lemman more they ſerue
Or they ſhul not my loue deſerue
For ſoth I am a falſe traytour
God iudged me for a theſe trechour
Forſworne I am, but wel nygh none
More of my gyle, tyl it be done.

Thrugh me hath many one deth receiued
That my treget neuer aperceyued
And yet receyueth, and ſhal receyue
That my falſneſſe ſhal neuer aperceyue
But who ſo doth, if he wiſe be
Him is right good be ware of me
But ſo ſlyghe is the aperceyuynge
That al to late cometh knowynge
For Proteus that coude him chaunge
In every ſhappe, homely and ſtraunge
Coude neuer ſuche gyle ne treaſoune
As I, for I come neuer in towne
There as I myght knowen be
Though men me both might here
Ful wel I can my clothes chaunge
Take one, and make another ſtraunge
Now am I knyght, now chaſtelayne
Now prelate, and now chaplayne
Now prieſt, now clerke, now foſtere
Now am I maiſter, now ſcholere
Now monke, now chanon, now bayly

Whatt euer myster mynne am I
Nowe am I prince, now am I page
And can by hert euery langage
Sometyme am I yonge, stoute, and bolde
Now am I Robert, now Robyn
Now Frere myno3, now Jacobyn
And with me foloweth my lotebY
To done me solace and company
That hight dame Abstinence, a3 saigned
In many a queynt arraye sayned
Right as it commeth to her lykyng
I fulfyl al her desyring
Sometyme a womans cloth take I
Now am I a mayde, nowe lady
Sometyme I am relygious
Now lyke an anker in an hous
Sometyme am I prioresse
And now a nonne, and nowe abbesse
And go through al regiouns
Seekynge al relygiouns
But to what order ꝑ I am swo3ne
I take the strawe and beate the co3ne
To folye folke I enhabyte
I aske no mo3e but her habite
What wol ye mo3e in euery wyse
Right as me lyste I me disgyse
Wel can I beare me vnder wede
Vnlyke is my wo3de to my dede
Thus make I in to my trappes fal
The people, through my priuileges al
That ben in christendome a lyue
I may assoyle, and I maye shryue
That no prelate may let me
All folke, where euer they founde be
I not no prelate may done so
But it the Pope be, and no mo
That made thilke estably shyng
Now is not this a propre thyng
But were my sleightes apercepued
As I was wont, and wost thou why
For I dyd hem a tregetry
But therof yeue I a lytel tale
I haue the syluer and the male
So haue I preched and eke shriuen
So haue I take, so haue I yeuen
Through her folye, husbonde and wyfe
That I lede right a iolye lyfe
Through symplesse of the prelacye
They knowe not all my tregetrye.

But for as moche as man and wyfe
Shuld shew her parishe priest her lyfe
Ones a yere, as sayth the boke
Er any wight his housel toke
Than haue I priuileges large
That may of muche thyng discharge
For he may say right thus parde
Sir priest, in shrifte I tel it the
That he to whom that I am shriuen
Hath me assoyled, and me yeuen
Penaunce sothly for my syn
Whiche that I founde me gylty in
Ne I ne haue neuer entencion
To make double confession
Ne reherce eft my shryft to the
O shrifte is right ynough to me
This ought the sufficyse wele
Ne be not rebell neuer a dele
For certes, though thou haddest it swo3ne
I wote no priest ne prelate bo3ne
That may to shrifte eft me constrayne
And if they done I wol me playne
For I wote where to playne wele
Thou shalt not streyne me a dele
Ne enfo3ce me, ne not me trouble
To make my confession double
Ne I haue none affection
To haue double absolucion
The first is ryght ynough to me
This latter assoyling quite I the
I am vnbounde, what mayst thou fynde
Mo3e of my synnes me to vnbynde
For he that myght hath in his honde
Of all my synnes me vnbonde
And if thou wolt me thus constrayne
That me mote nedes on the playne
There shall no iuge imperiall
Ne bysshop, ne officiall
Done iugement on me, for I
Shal gone and playne me openly
Vnto my shrift father newe
That hight Frere wolfe boterewe
And he shal chuse him for me
For I trowe he can hamper the
But lo3de he wolde be wo3the withall
Yf men wolde him Frere wolfe call
For he wold haue no pacyence
But done al cruel vengience
He wolde his myght done at the leest
Nothyng spare for goddes heest
And god so wysly be my socour
But thou yeue me my sauuour
At Ester, whan it lyketh me
Without preasyng mo3e on the
I wol forth, and to him gone

And

And he shal housel me anone
For I am out of thy gruchyng
I kepe not deale with the nothyng
Thus may he shrine him, that forsaketh
his paryshe preest, and to me taketh
And if the preest wol him refuse
I am ful redy him to accuse
And him punishe and hamper so
That he his churche shal forgo

But who so hath in his feleyng
The consequence of suche shriuyng
Shal sene, þ preest maye neuer haue myght
To know the conscience a right
Of him, that is vnder his cure
And this is ayenst holy scripture
That byddeth euery herde honest
Haue bery knowyng of his herst
But poore folke that goo by strete
That haue no golde, ne summes grete
Hem wolde I let to her prelates
Or let her preestes know her states
For to me right nought yeue they
And why it is, for they ne may
They ben so bare, I take no kepe
But I wol haue the fat shepe
Let paryshe preestes haue the lene
I yeue not of her harme a bene
And if that prelates grutche it
That oughten woth be in her wit
To lese her fat beestes so
I shal yeue hem a stroke or two
That they shal lesen with force
Yt, both her myere and her croce
Thus iape I hem, and haue do longe
My priuileges ben so stronge.

False Semblant wold haue flyted here
But Loue ne made him no suche chere
That he was wery of his sawe
But for to make him glad and fawe
He said, tel on more specially
How that thou seruest buttraly
Tel forth, and shame the neuer a dele
For as thyne habyt sheweth wele
Thou seruest an holy heremyte
Sothe is, but I am but an ypocryte
Thou goest and prechest pouerte
Ye sir, but richesse hath poste
Thou prechest abstynence also
Sir, I wol fyllen so mote I go
My paunche, of good meate and wyne
As shulde a maister of dyuyne
For howe that I me poore fayne
Yet al poore folke I disdayne.

I Loue better the acqueyntaunce
Ten tymes of þ kynge of Fraunce
Than of a poore man of mylde mode
Though that his soule be also good
For whan I se beggers quakyng
Naked on myxins al stynkyng
For hunger crye, and eke for care
I entremet not of her fare
They ben so poore, and ful of pyne
They might not ones yeue me a dyne
For they haue nothynge but her lyfe
What shulde he yeue þ lyeketh his knyfe
It is but foly to entremete
To seke in houndes nest fat mete
Let beare him to the spyttle anone
But for me, comforte get they none
But a riche sicke vsurere
Wolde I visyte and drawe nere
Him wolde I comforte and rehete
For I hope of his golde to gete
And if that wicked deth him haue
I wol go with him in his graue
And if there any reproue me
Why that I let the poore be
Wost thou howe I not ascape
I say and swere him ful rape
That riche men han more retches
Of synne, than han poore wretches
And han of counsayle more myster
And therfore I wolde drawe hem ner
But as great hurt, it may so be
Hath a soule in right great pouerte
As soule in great richesse forsothe
Al be it that they hurten bothe
For richesse and mendicitees
Bene cleped two extremytees
The meane is cleped Suffysaunce
The there lyeth of vertue the aboūdaunce
For Salomon ful wel I wote
In his Parables vs wrote
As it is knowen of many a wyght
In his thirtene chapiter right
God thou me kepe for thy poste
Fro richesse and mendicite
For if a riche man him dresse
To thinke to moche on richesse
His hert on that so ferre is sette
That he his creatour doth forgette
And him that beggeth wol aye greue
Howe shuld I by his worde him leue

Unneth that he vys a mycher
Forswome, or els goddes lyer
Thus saith Salomon sawes
Ne we fynde wryttē in no lawes
And namely in our christen laye
Who saith ye, I dare say naye
That Christ, ne his apostels here
Whyle that they walked in erthe here
Were neuer seen herbryd beggyng
For they nolden beggen for nothyng
And right thus were men wont to techē
And in this wyse wolde it preche
The maisters of dyuinyte
Somtyme in Parys the cyte.

And if men wolde there gayne appose
The naked texte and let the glose
It might soone assoyled be
For men may wel the sothe se
That parbye they myght aske a thynge
Plainly forth without beggynge
For they weren goddes heerdes here
And cure of soules hadden here
They nolde nothyng begge her foode
For after Christ was done on roode
With their proper hondes they wrought
And with traueyle, and eis nought
They wonnen al her sustenaunce
And lyueden forth in her penaunce
And the remenaunt yaf awaye
To other poore folkes alwaye
They neither bylden towre ne halle
But they in houses smal with alle
A myghty man that can and maye
Shuld with his honde a body alwaye
Wynne him his foode in labouring
Yf he ne haue rent or suche a thyng
Although he be religyous
And god to seruen curious
Thus mote he done, or do trespas
But if it be in certayne caas
That I can reherce, if myster be
Right wel, whan the tyme I se.

Seke the boke of saynte Austyne
Be it in paper or perchemene
There as he wryte of these worchynges
Thou shalt sene that none excusynges
A perfyte man ne shuld seke
By wordes, ne by dedes eke
Although he be religyous
And god to seruen curyous
That hem shal, so mote I go
With proper hondes, and body also
Get his foode in laboryng
Yf he ne haue propryete of thyng
Yet shuld he sel al his substaunce
And with his swynke haue sustenaunce
If he be parfyte in bounte
Thus han the bokes tolde me
For he that wol gone ydelly
And vseth it aye besyly
To haunten other mennes table
He is a trechour ful of fable
Ne he ne may by good reason
Excuse him by his orison
For men behoueth in some gyse
Ben somtyme in goddes seruise
To gone and purchasen her nede
When mote eaten, that is no drede
And slepe, and eke do other thyng
So long may they leaue prayeng
So may they eke her prayer blynne
Whyle þ they werke her meate to wynne
Seint Austyn wol therto accorde
In thylke boke that I recorde
Justinian eke, that made lawes
Hath thus forboden by olde sawes

No man, by payne to be herd
Myghty of body, to begge his herd
Yf he may swynke it for to gete
Men shuld him rather mayme or bete
Or done of him aprete iustyce
Than suffren him in suche malyce
They done not wel so mote I go
That taken suche almesse so
But if they haue some priuilege
That of the payne hem wol alege
But howe that is, can I not se
But if the prince dispensed be
Ne I ne wene not sykerly
That they may haue it rightfully
But I wol not determyne
Of princes power, ne defyne
Ne by my worde comprehende twis
Yf it so ferre may stretche in this
I wol not entermete a dele
But I trowe that the boke saith wele
Who that taketh almesses, that be
Dewe to folke that men may se
Lame, feble, wery, and bare
Poore, or in suche maner care
That con wynne hem neuer mo
For they haue no power therto
He eateth his owne dampnyng

But

But yf he lye, that made al thyng
And yf ye suche a truaunt fynde
Chastyse hym wel, yf ye be kynde
But they wolde haue you parcaas
Yf ye fyllen in her laas
They wolde eftsones do you scathe
Yf that they myght, late or rathe
For they be not ful patient
That han the worlde thus foule blent
And weneth wel, that god bad
The good man sel al that he had
And folowe him, and to poore it yeue
He wolde not therfore that he lyue
To seruen hym in mendience
For it was neuer his sentence
But he bad werken, whan that nede is
And folowe hym in good dedes
Saint Poule that loued al holy church
He bade the apostels for to wurch
And wynne her lyuelode in that wyse
And hem defended truandyse
And sayd, werketh with your honden
Thus shulde the thyng be understonden
He nolde twis haue bydden beggyng
Ne sellen godspel, ne prechyng
Lest they deraste, with her askyng
Folke of her catel or of her thyng
For in this worlde is many a man
That yeueth hys good, for he ne can
Werne it for shame, or els he
Wolde of the asker delyuered be
And for he hym encombreth so
He yeueth hym good to let hym go
But it can hym nothyng profyte
They lese the pese and the meryte
The good folke that Poule to preched
Profred hym ofte, whan he hem teched
Some of her good in charite
But therof ryght nothyng toke he
But of hys houde wolde he gette
Clothes to wrine hym and hys mete.

Tel me than howe a man may lyuen
That al his good to poore hath yeuen
And wol but onely bydde hys bedes (nen
And neuer with hondes labour his nedes
May he do so. Ye sir: And howe
Sir: I wol gladly tel you
Sayth Iusten sayethe, a man may be
In houses that han properte
As temples, and hospytelers
And as these chanons reguleres
Or whyte monkes, or these blacke
I wol no mo ensamples make
And take the therof hys sufficyng
For therin lythe no beggyng
But otherwayes not ywis
Yet Iusten gabbeth not of this
And yet ful many a monke laboureth
That god in holy churche honoureth
For whan her swynkyng is agon
They rede and syng in churche anone

And for there hath ben great discorde
As many a wyght may beare recorde
Upon the estate of mẽdicience
I wol shortely in your presence
Tel howe a man may begge at nede
That hath not wherwith him to fede
Maugre hys felowes langlynges
For sothfastnesse wol none hydynges
And yet percase I may obey
That I to you sothly thus sey.

LO here the case especial
If a man be so bestial
That he of no crafte hath science
And nought desyreth ignorence
Than may he go a beggyng yerne
Tyl he some other crafte can lerne
Through whiche without truanding
He may in trouthe haue hys lyuyng
Or if he may done no labour
For elde, or sickenesse, or langour
Or for his tender age also
Than may he yet a beggyng go
Or if he haue peraventure
Through blage of hys nouriture
Lyued ouer delycously
Than oughten good folke comenly
Han of hys mischefe some pyte
And suffren hym also, that he
May gon about and begge his bred
That he be not for honger ded
Or if he haue of crafte conning
And strength also, and desiryng
To worchen, as he had what
But he fynde neither this ne that
Than may he begge tyl that he
Haue getten hys ne cessite
Or if hys wynnyng be so lyte
That hys labour wol not aquyte
Sufficiauntly al hys lyuyng
Yet may he go his bede beggyng
Fro doore to doore, he may go trace
Tyl he the remnaunt may purchase

Or if a man wolde vndertake
Any empryse for to make
In the reames of our lay
And it defenden, as he may
Be it with armes, or lettrure
Or other conuenable cure
If it be so he poore be
Than may he begge, tyl that he
May finde in trouth for to swynke
And get him clothe, meate, and drinke
Swynke he with his hondes corporel
And not with hondes espirituel.

In all this case, & in semblables
If ỳ there ben mo resonables
he may beg, as I tell you here
And els not, in no manere
As Wyllyam saynt Amour wolde preche
And ofte wolde dispute and teche
Of thys matter al openly
At Paris ful solemply
And also god my soule blesse
As he had in this stedfastnesse
The accorde of the vnyuersyte
And of the people, as semeth me.

No good man ought it to refuse
Ne ought hym therof to excuse
Be wroche or blythe, who so be
For I wol speke, and tel it the
Al shulde I dye, and be put doun
As was sayne Poule in derke prisoun
Or be exiled in this caas
With wronge, as maister William was
That my mother Hypocrise
Banished for her great enuye.

My mother semed hym sainte Amour
This noble did suche labour
To susteyne euer the loyaute
That he to muche agylte me
He made a boke, and let it write
Wherin this lyke he dyd al write
And wolde eche renied begging
And lyue by my traueyling
If I ne had rent ne other good
What weneth he that I were woode
For labour might me neuer plese
I haue more wyl to ben at ease
And haue wel leuer, sothe to say
Before the people patter and pray
And wyre me in my forcyre
Under a cope of papeiaye.

(O Loue) what diuel is this ỳ I here
What wordes telleſt thou me here
What sir Faitenesse that apert is
Than dredeſt thou not gode No certis
For selde in great thing shal he spede
In this worlde, that god wol drede
For folke that hem to vertue peurn
And truely on her owne lyuern
And hem in goodnesse aye contente
On hem is litel thrifte ysene
Suche folke drynken great miseſe
That lyfe may me neuer plese.
But se what golde han vsurers
And sliuer eke in garners
Taylagiers, and theſe monyours
Bayliffes, bedels, provost, countours
Theſe lyuern wel nygh by rauyne
The smale people hem more enclyne
And they as wolues wol hem eten
Upon the poore folke they geten
Ful muche of that they spende or kepe
Is none of hem that he nyl stepe
And wyne hem self wel at ful
Without scaldyng, they hem pul
The stronge the feble ouergothe
But I that weare my symple clothe
Robbe bothe robbyng and robbours
And gyle gyling, and gylours
By my treget, I gather and thrifte
The [illegible]at treasour into my cheſte
That lyeth with me so fast bounde
Myn high paleys do I founde
And my delyces I fulfyll
With wyne at feſtes, at my wyll
And tables ful of entremetes
I wol no life, but ease and pees
And winne golde to spende also
For whan the great bagge is go
It cometh ryght with my tapes
Make I not wel tomble myn apes
To wynnen is alway myn entente
My purchace is better than my rente
For though I shulde beten be
Ouer al I entremet me
Without me may no wight dure
I walke soules for to cure
Of al the worlde cure haue I
In brede and length boldly
I wol bothe preche, and eke counsayle
With hondes wol I not trauayle
For of the Pope I haue the bul
I ne holde not my wittes dul
I wol not stynten in my lyue,

Thei

Thefe Emperours for to ſhryue
Of kynges, dukes, and lordes grete
But poore folke al quite I lete
I woue no ſuche ſhriuing parde
But it for other cauſe be
I recke not of poore men
Her eſtate is not worthe an hen
Wher findeſt thou a ſwynker of labour
Gaue me to hys confeſſour
But Empreſſes, and duchefſes
Thefe quenes, and the counteſſes
Thefe abbeſſes, and eke bygyns
Thefe great ladyes palaſyns
Thefe ioly knyghtes, and bayliues
Thefe nonnes, and theſe burgeys wiues
That ryche ben, and eke plefyng
And theſe maydens welfaryng
Wher ſo they clad or naked be
Vnconſayled gothe there none fro me
And for her ſoules ſaucte
Ye lorde and lady, and her meyne
I aſſe, whan they hem to me ſhryue
The propertie of al her lyue
And make hem trowe, both moſte & leeſt
Her paryſhe preeſt is but a beeſt
Syens me and my company
That ſhrewes ben as great (as I)
For whiche I wol not hyde in holde
Na priuete that me is tolde
That I by worde or fygne ywis
Ne wol make hem knowe what it is
And they wollen alſo tellen me
They bele fro me no priuete
And for to make you hem perceyuen
That ben folke thus to deceyuen
I wol you fayne withouten drede
What men maye in the goſpel rede
Of ſayne Mathewe the goſpelleere
That ſayethe, as I ſhal you ſay here.

Vpon the chayre of Moſes
Thus it is gloſed douties
(That is the olde teſtament
For therby is the chayre ment)
Syne Scribes and Pharyſen
That is to ſayne, the curſed men
Whiche that we ypocrytes call
Dothe that they preche I rede you al
But dothe not as they done a dele
That bene not wery to ſay wele
But to do wel, no wyl haue they
And they wolde bynde no folke alway
That beue to begyled able
Burdons that bene importable
On folkes ſhulders thynges they couchen
That they nyl with her fyngers touchen
And why wol they not touche it why
For hem ne lyſte nat ſykerly
For ſadde burdons that men taken
Make folkes ſhulders aken
And if they do ought that good be
That is for folke it ſhulde ſe
Her burdons larger maken they
And maken her hemmes wyde alway
And louen ſtates at the table
The firſt, and moſte honourable
And for to haue the firſt chayris
In ſynagogges, to hem ful dere is
And wyllen that folke hem loute & grete
Whan that they paſſen through the ſtrete
And wollen be cleped maiſter alſo
But they ne ſhulde not wyllen ſo
The goſpel is there agayn I geſſe
That ſheweth wel her wickednesſe

Another cuſtome vſe we
Of hem that wol ayenſt vs be
We hate hym deedly euery chone
And we wol werrey hym, as one
Hym that one hateth, hate we al
And coniecte, howe to done hym fal
And if we ſene hym wynne honour
Rycheſſe or preyſe, through his valour
Prouende, rent, or dignite
Ful faſte ywis compaſſen we
By what ladder he is clomben ſo
And for to maken hym downe to go
With trayſon we wol hym defame
And done hym leſe hys good name
Thus from hys ladder we him take
And thus his frendes foes we make
But worde ne wete ſhal he none
Tyl al hys frendes ben hys fone
For if we dyd it openly
We might haue blame redily
For had he wyſte of our malyce
He had hym kepte, but he were nyce

Another is this, that if ſo fal
That there be one among vs al
That doth a good turne, out of drede
We ſayne it is out alder dede
Ye ſykerly, though he it fayned
Or that hym lyſte, or that hym dayned
A man through hym auaunced be
Therof al parceners be we

And

And tellen folke, where so we go
That manne through vs is stronger so
And for to haue of men praysing
Oure purchace through our flatterynge
Of ryche men of great poste
Lettres, to witnesse our bounte
So that man wenneth that may vs se
That al vertue in vs be
And alway poore we vs fayne
But howe so that we begge or playne
We ben the folke without leasyng
That al thyng haue without hauyng
Thus we be dradde of the people ywis
And gladly my purpose is this.
I deale with no wight, but he
Haue golde and treasour great plente
Yet acquayntaunce wel loue I
This muche my desyre shortely
I entremete me of bretages
I make peace, and mariages
I am gladly executour
And many tymes a procuratour
I am sometyme messagere
That falleth not to my mystere
And many tymes I make enquest
For me that office is nat honest
To deale with other mennes thyng
That is to me a great lykyng
And if that ye haue ought to do
In place that I repaire to
I shal it speden through my witte
As sone as ye haue tolde me it
So that ye serue me to paye
My seruyce shalbe yours alwaye
But who so wol chastyce me
Anone my loue loste hath he
For I loue no man in no gyse
That wol me reprone or chastise
But I wol al folke vndertake
And of no wight no teachyng take
For I that other folke chastye
Wol not be taught fro my folye.

I Loue none Hermitage more
Ne desertes, and holtes hoore
And great woodes ruerychone
I let hem to ỳ baptyst John
I quyte hym quite and hym relesse
Of Egipt al the wyldernesse
To frere were al my mansyons
Fro al cities and good townes
My paleys and myne house make I
There men may reme in openly
And say that I the worlde forsake
But al amydde I bylde, and make
My house, a swimme and play therin
Bette than a fysshe doth with his fynne.

Of Antechristes men am I
Of whiche that Christ sayth openly
They haue habyte of holynesse
And lyuen in suche wickednesse
To the copye, if him taryrnt take
Of the Euangelystes booke
There myght he se by great treasoun
Ful many a false compariſoun
As muche as through his great might
Be it of heate or of light
The sonne surmounteth the moone
That troubler is, and chaungeth soone
And the more kyndel the sterre
I shoone nat that I you telle
Right so without any gyle
Surmounteth this noble Euangyle
The worde of any Euangyliſt
And to her tyme they token Christ
And many suche comparisoun
Of whiche I make no mencioun
Myght men in that boke fynde
Who so coude of hem haue mynde

The vnfaythfulle that tho was a slepe
Gan to brayde, and taken kepe
And at the noyse, the herd vp cast
Ne neuer sythen slept it fast
But vp it sterte, and armes take
Ayenst this false horrible boke
Al redy batayle for to make
And to the Juge the boke they take
But they that broughten the boke thyder
Hent it anone away for fere
They nolde shewe it no more a dele
But than it kept, and kepen wele
Tyl suche a tyme that they may se
That they so stronge woxen be
That no wight may hem wel withstonde
For by that boke they durst not stonde
Away they gonne it for to bere
For they ne durst not answere
By exposicion no glooſe
To that that clerkes wel appoſe
Ayenst the cursednesse ywis
That in that boke writen is
Nowe wotte I nat, ne I can nat se
What maner ende that there shal be
Of al this that they hyde

But

gut yet algate they shal abyde
Tyl that they maye it bette defende
Thys trowe I best wol be her ende

Thus Antechrist abyden we
For we bene all of hys meyne
And what manne that wol not be so
Right soone he shal hys lyfe forgo
Our warde Lamben semen we
Ful of goodnesse and of pyte
And inwarde we withouten fable
Bene gredy wolues rauysshable
We enuyroun bothe londe and se
With al the worlde wetteyen we
We wol ordayne of al thyng
Of folkes good, and het lyuyng.

If there be castell or cytee
Wherin that any bougerons be
Although that they of Apyllayne were
For therof bene they blamed there
Or of a wight out of measure
Wolde leane her golde, and take vsure
For that he is so coueytous
Or if he be to Lecherous
Or there that haunten Symonye
Or Prouost ful of trecherye
Or Prelate lyuyng iolyfye
Or preest that shit hys quere hym by
Or olde hoores hostyleres
Or other baudes or bordelleres
Or is blamed of any vyce
Of whiche men shulden done iustyce
By al the sayntes that we pray
But they defende them with lamprey
With luce, with eles, with salmons
With tender gres, and with capons
With tartres, or with cheses fatte
With beyne flaunes, brode and flatte
With caleweys, or with pullayle
With conynges, or with fyne vytayle
That we vnder our clothes wyde
Maken through our golet glyde
Or but he wol do come in haste
Our benison bake in paste
Whether so that loure or groyne
He shal haue of a corde a loygne
With whiche men shal hym bynde and lede
To brenne hym for hys synful dede
That men shul here hym crye and roze
Thyes way about and moze
Or els he shal in prison dye
But yf he wol hys frendshyp bye
Or smerten that, that he hath do
Moze than his gylte amounteth to
But and he couthe, through his sleight
Do maken vp a toure of height
Nought rought I, whe der of stone or tre
Or erthe, or turues though it be
Though it were of no vounde stone
Al wrought with squier and scantilone
So that the tour were stuffed wel
With al ryches tempozel
And then that he wolde vp dresse
Engyns, bothe moze and lesse
To caste at vs by euery syde
To bere hys good name wyde
Suche sleyghtes I shal you yeuen
Barelles of wine, by fyre or seuen
Or golde in sackes great plente
He shulde soone delyuered be
And yf he haue no suche pyrences
Let hym study in equipolences
And lette lyes and fallaces
If that he wolde deserue our graces
Or we shal beare hym suche witnesse
Of synne, and of his wzetchednesse
And done hys lose so wyde renne
That al quicke we shulde hym brenne
Or els yeue hym suche penaunce
That is wel worse than the pytaunce.

For thou shalt neuer for nothyng
Con knowen a right by her clothyng
The traytours ful of trecherye
But thou her werkes can espye
And ne had the good kepyng be
Whylom of the vniuersyte
That kepeth the key of chrisendome
We had bene turmented al and some
Suche bene the stynkyng prophetis
Nis none of hem, that good prophete is
For they through wicked entencion
The yere of the incarnacyon
A thousande, and two hundred yere
Fyue and fyfte ferther ne nere
Broughten a boke with sory grace
To yeuen ensample in commen place
That sayd thus, though it were fable
This is the gospel pardurable
That fro the holy gost is sent
Wel were it wrothe to ben brent
Entryed was in suche manere
This boke, of whiche I tel here
There nas no wyght in al Paris
Before out Lady at paruis

That

That they ne might the booke by
The sentence pleased hem wel trewely
But I wol stynte of this matere
For it is wonder longe to here
But hadde that ilke booke endured
Of better estate I were ensured
And freendes haue I yet parde
That han me sette in great degre

Of al this worlde is Emperour
Gyle my father, the trechour
And Empresse my mother is
Daungre the holy goost ywis
Our mighty linage, and our route
Reigneth in euery reigne aboute
And wel is worthy we ministers be
For al this worlde gouerne we
And can the folke so wel deceyue
That none our gyle can perceyue
And though they done, they dare not say
The sothe dare no wight bewray
But he in Christes wrathe him lederth
That more than Christ my brethren bredeth
He nys no fol good champion
That bredeth suche similacion
Nor that for payne wol refusen
Us to correcte and accusen
He wol not entremete by right
Ne haue god in his eye sight
And therfore god shal him punyce
But me ne reckeryth of no vyce
Sythen men vs louen comunably
And holden vs for so worthy
That we may folke repreue echone
And we nyl haue repreue of none
Whom shulden folke worshipen so
But vs that stynten neuer ino
To parren, while that folke may vs se
Though it not so behynde hem be

And where is more woode folye
Than to enhaunce chyualrye
And loue noble men and gay
That foly clothes weren alway
If they be suche folke as they semen
So clene, as men her clothes demen
And that her wordes folowe her dede
It is great pyte out of drede
For they wol be none hypocrytis
Of hem me thinketh great spyte is
I can not loue hem on no syde
But beggers with these hoodes wyde
And sleigh and pale faces leane
And graye clothes nat ful cleane
But frettred ful of tatarwaggges
And high shoes knopped with daggers
That frounce lyke a quayle pype
Or bootes ryuelyng as a gype
To suche folke, as I you deuise
Shulde princes and these lordes wise
Take al her landes and her thinges
Bothe warre and peace in gouernynges
To suche folke shulde a prynce him preue
That wolde his lyfe in honour lyue.

And yf they be nat as they seme
That seruen thus the worlde to queme
There wolde I dwel to decreyue
The folke, for they shal nat perceyue
But I ne speke in no suche wyse
That men shulde humble habite dispise
So that no pride there vnder be
No man shulde hate, as thinketh me
The pore man in suche clothinge
But god ne preyseth him nothinge
That sayth be hath the worlde forsake
And hath to worldely glorie him take
And wol of suche deceyers vse
Who may that begger wel excuse
That papelarde, that him reioyseth so
And wol to worldely ease go
And sayth that he the worlde hath lefte
And gredily it gripeth efte
He is the honde, shame is to sayne
That to his callyng goth ageyne.

But vnto you dare I not lye
But myght I feien or eschye
That ye perceyued it nothyng
Ye shulde haue a sharpe leasyng
Right in your honde thus to begynne
I nolde it lette for no synne
The god lought at the wonder tho
And euery wight gane laugh also
And sayde: Lo here a manne ryght
For to be trusty to euery wyght

Hyse Semblant (quod Loue) say to me
Sithe I thus haue anounced the
That in my courte is thy dwellyng
And ofsybandes shalt be my kyng
Wolt thou wel holden my forwardes?
Ye sir, from hence forwardes
Are wol a people vpon hym areyse
And thrugh our gyle, do me hym crise
And hym on sharpe speares ryse

Or other wayes bring him fro lyue
But if that he wol folowe ywis
That in our boke writyen is.

Thus muche wol our booke signifye
That while Peter hath maistrye
May neuer Johan shewe wel his myght
Now haue I you declared ryght
The meanyng of the barne and synde
That maketh the enuenions blynde
But nowe at erst I wol begyn
To expowne you the pythe within
And the sentence compytheude
That Christes lawe wol betrade
And shulde it happen and mayntenen
Armes bern that al sustenen
And fallyne to the people trchen
That Johan betokeneth hem to prechen
That there nis lawe couenable
But thilke gospell parduable
That fro the holy goste was sent
Eyther folke that ben mischeuent.

The strength of Johan they vnderstonde
The grace in which they say they stonde
That doth the synful folke conuerte
And hem to Jesu Christ reuerte
Ful many an other horrible
May men in that booke se
That ben commaunded doutelesse
Armes the lawe of Rome expresse
And all with Antichrist they holden
As men may in the booke beholden
And thus commaunden they to sterne
All tho that wyth Peter bern
But they shal neuer haue that myght
And god to forne, for stryfe to fyght
That they ne shall ynough fynde
That Peters lawe shal haue in mynde
And euer holde, and so mayntene
That at the laste it shal be sene
That they shall all come therto
For aught that they can speke or do
And thilke lawe shal not stonde
That they by Johan haue vnderstonde
But mangre hem, it shall aboun
And ben brought to confusioun
Had neuer pope father here byfore
Seruaunt so erre we, sythe he was bore
That is ayenst all nature
Sir, put you in that aventure
For though ye borowes take of me
The sharer shall ye neuer be
For hostages, ne sykernesse
Or charters, for to beare witnesse
I take your selfe to recorde here
That men ne may, in no manere
Teren the wolfe out of his hyde
Lythe be slayne, backe and syde
Though men him beate and al defyle
What wene ye that I wol begyle
For I am clothed meekely
There vnder is al my treachery
Myne herte chaungeth neuer the mo
For none habyt, in which I go
Though I haue there of symplenesse
I am not wery of shrewdnesse
My lemman, straygned Abstenaunce
Hath myster of my purueyaunce
She had ful longe ago be dede
Nere my counsayle and my rede
Let her alone, and you and me
And Loue answerde, I trust the
Without borowe, for I wol none
And False Semblant the theefe anone
Right in that like same place
That had of treason al his face
Right blacke within, and white without
Thankyng him, gan on his knees loute.

Than was there nought, but euery man
Nowe to assaute, that sayen can
(Quod Loue) and that ful hardely
Than armed they hem comenly
Of suche armour, as to hem fell
Whan they were armed, fiers and fell
They went hem forth al in a route
And set the castel al aboute
They wyl not away for no drede
Tyl it so be that they ben dede
Or tyl they haue the castel take
And foure bateis they gan make
And parted hem in foure anone
And toke her way, and forth they gone
The foure gates for to assayle
Of whiche the keepers wol not fayle
For they ben neither sycke ne dede
But hardy folke, and stronge in dede.

Nowe wol I faine the countenaunce
Of False Semblant, and Abstynaunce
That ben to wicked tonge went
But first they helde her parlyment
Whether it to done were
To maken hem be knowen there
Or elis walken forth disguysed

But at the laste they bewyted
That they wolde gone in copynage
As it were in a pylgrymage
Lyke good and holy folke entryned
And dame Abstynence streyned
Toke on a robe of Camelyne
And gan her gratche as a bygyne
A large couerchiefe of threde
She wrapped al about her hede
But she forgate not her ptaltere
A payre of beedes eke she bere
Upon a lace, al of whyte threde
On whiche that she her beedes bede
But she ne bought hem neuer a dele
For they were gyuen her, I wote wele
God wote of a ful holy freere
That sayde he was her father dere
To whom she had after went
Than any freere of his couent
And he visyted her also
And many a sermon sayd her to
He nolde let for man on lyue
That he ne wolde her ofte shryue
And with so great deuocyon
They made her confession
That they had oft for the nones
Two herdes in one hoode at ones
Of fayre shappe, I deuyse her the
But pale of face somtyme was she
That false traytoureste vntrewe
Was lyke that salowe horse of hewe
That in the Apocalips is shewed
That signifieth tho folke beshrewed
That ben al ful of trecherye
And pale, through hypocrisye
For on that horse no colour is
But onely dead and pale ywis
Of suche a colour enlangoured
Was Abstynence ywys coloured
Of her estate she her repented
As her visage represented
She had a burdowne al of thefte
That Gyle had yeue her of hys yefte
And a scrippe of fayned bysinesse
That ful was of elengenesse
And forth she walked sobrely
And False Semblant sayde, le vous die
And as it were for suche mistere
Done on the cope of a freere
With cheere symple, and full pytous
His lokyng was not disdeynous
But pesyble, and meke and full petyble
About his necke he bare a Byble
And squiertly, forth gan he gon
And for to rest his lymmes vpon
He had of treason a porcyl
As he were feble, his way he went
But in his sleue he gan to espyen
A rasour sharpe, and wel byten
That was forged in a forge
Which that men clepen Coupe gorge
So longe forthe her waye they nomen
Tyll they to a pyked Tonge comen
That at his gate was styrryng
And sawe folke in the waye passyng
The pylgrymes sawe he faste by
That beren hem full meketly
And humbly they with hym mette
Dame Abstynence fyrste hym grette
And sythe hym False Semblant saluet
And he hem, but he not remeuet
For he ne dredde hem not a dele
For whan he sawe her faces wele
Alwaye in herte, him thought so
He shulde knowe hem bothe two
For wel he knewe dame Abstynence
But he ne knewe not Constreynaunce
He knewe nat that she was constrayned
Ne of her thewes lyke fayned
But wende she come of wyll all free
But she come in another degree
And yf of good wyll she begonne
That wyll was fayled her thonne.

And False Semblant had he sayne alle
But he knewe nat that he was false
Yet false was he, but his falsenesse
Ne coude he nat espye, nor gesse
For Semblant was so slye wrought
That falsenesse he ne espyed nought
But haddest thou knowen him before
Thou woldest on a boke haue swore
Whan thou him saugh in clothe arayed
That he, that whilom was so gayed
And of the daunce Joly Robyn
Was tho become a Jacobyn
But sothely what so men him call
Freere pirthouts here good men all
Her order wickedly they beren
Suche mynstrelles, yf they weren
So ben Augustyns, and Cordyliers
And Carmes, and eke sacked freers
And al freers shodde and bare
Though some of hem bene great and square
Ful holy men, as I hem deme
Euerych of hem wolde good man seme

But

But shalte thou neuer of apparence
Here conclude good consequence
In none argument ywis
Yf cristens al fayled is
For men maye fynde alwaye sopheme
The consequence to enuemie
Who so that hath hadde the subtelte
The double sentence for to se.

Whan the pylgrymes commen were
To wycked Tonge that dwelled there
Her harneys nygh hem was algate
By wycked tonge adowne they sate
That hadde hem nere him for to come
And of tydynges telle him some
And sayde hem: What cause maketh you
To come in to this place nowe?

SIr sayd Sorayned Abstynaunce
We be for to dyre our penaunce
With hertes pytous and deuoute
Ire commen, as pylgrimes gon aboute
Wel nyghe on foote alway we go
Ful doughty ben our heeles two
And thus bothe we ben sent
Throughout the world that is mislwent
To yeue ensample, and preche also
To fysshen synful men we go
For other fysshynge, ne fysshe we
And sir, for that charyte
As we be wonte, herbarowe we craue
Your lyfe to amende Christe it saue
And so it shulde you not displease
We wolden, if it were your ease
A shorte sermon vnto you sayne
And Wicked Tonge answered agayne
The house (quod he) suche (as ye se)
Shal nat be warned you for me
Say what you lyst, and I wol here
Graunt mercy (swete sir dere)

(Quod alderfirst) dame Abstynence
And thus began she her sentence
Sir, the firste vertue certayne
The greatest, and moste souerayne
That may be founde in any man
For hauyng, or for wyt he can
That is his tonge to refrayne
Therto ought euery wight him payne
For it is better stylle be
Than for to speken harme parde
And he that harkeneth it gladly
He is no good man sykerly

And sir, aboue al other synne
In that arte thou moste gilty inne
Thou spake a tape, not longe a go
And sir, that was right yuell do
Of a yonge man, that here repayred
And neuer yet this place apayred
Thou saydest he awayted nothyng
But to disceyue Fayre Welcomyng
Ye said nothyng sothe of that
But sir, ye lye, I tel you plat
He ne cometh no more, ne gothe parde
I trowe ye shal him neuer se
Fayre Welcomyng in prison is
That ofte hath played with you er this
The fayrest games that he coude
Without fylth styl or loude
Nowe dare she not her selfe solace
Ye han also the man do chace
That he dare neyther come ne go
What meueth you to hate him so?
But properly your wycked thought
That many a false leasyng hath thought
That meueth your foule eloquence
That iangleth euer in audyence
And on the folke arysseth blame
And dothe hem dishonour and shame
For thynge that maye haue no preuyng
But lykelynesse, and contrepoysyng.

For I dare sayne, that Reason demeth
It is not al sothe thynge that semeth
And it is synne to controue
Thynge that is to reproue
This wote ye wele, and sir: therfore
Ye arne to blame the more
And natheles, he recheth lyte
He peueth not nowe therof a myte
For yf he thought harme parfaye
He wolde come and gone all daye
He coude hym selfe not absteyne
Nowe cometh he not, and that is sene
For he ne taketh of it no cure
But if it be through auenture
And lasse than other folke algate
And thou her watchest at the gate
With speare in thyne arest alwaye
There muse musarde all the daye
Thou wakest nyght and daye for thought
I wys thy trauayle is for nought
And Jelousye wythouten fayle
Shall neuer quyte the thy trauayle
And skathe is, that Fayre Welcomyng
Withoute any trespassyng

What wrongfully in prison he
There wepeth and lamenteth he
And though thou never yet yvele
Agylteste man no more but this
Take not a grete it were worthe
To put the out of this derke
And afterwarde in prison fre
And fetered the eyl that thou dye
For thou shalte for thys synne dwelle
Right in the deuyls arse of helle
But yf that thou repente the
Mayetaye, thou lyest falsely (quod he)
What, welcome wyth myschaunce now
Have I therfore herbered you
To saye me shame, and eke reproue
With sorye happe to youre behoue
Am I to day youre herbegere
Go herbere you els where, than here
That han a lyer called me
Two tregetours arte thou and he
That in myne house, do me this shame
And for my sothe sawe ye me blame
Is thys the sermon that ye make
To all the dyuels I me take
Or els god thou me confounde
But er men dydden this castell founde
It passeth not ten dayes or twelue
But it was tolde right to my selue
And as they sayde, right so tolde I
He hyllé the Rose pryuyly
Thus sayde I now, and have sayd yore
I not where he dyd any more
Why shulde men saye me suche a thyng
If it had ben gabbyng
Nyghte so sayde I, and wolle saye yet
I trowe I lyed not ofte
And with my hornes I wolle blowe
To all neyghbours arowe
Howe he hath bothe comen and gone
Tho spake false Semblant right anone
All is not gospell oute of boute
That men sayne in the rowne aboute
Lay no dreste erte to my spekyng
I swere you sir, it is gabbyng
I trowe ye wote well certaynly
That no man loueth him renderly
That saith him harme, if he wote it
All be he never so poore of wit
And sothe is alle sykerly
Ech knowe ye fyr, as wel as I
That louers gladly wol bysyen
The place there her loues habyten
And man you loueth, and eke honoureth
This man to serue you laboureth
And clepeth you his frende fo dere
And this man maketh you good chere
And euery where that you meeteth
He you saluteth, and he you greeteth
He preseth nat so ofte, ryght ye
Oughte of his comynge encombred be
There presen other folke on you
Ful ofter than he doth nowe
And yf hys herte hym strayned so
Unto the Rose for to go
Ye shulde hym sene so ofte urbe
That ye shulde take hym with the bebe
He coude hys comynge not forbeare
Thoughe he him thrylled wery a speare
It were not than, as it is nowe
But trusteth well, I sweare it you
That it is clene out of hys thought
Sir, certes he ne thynketh it nought
No more ne doth fayre welcomyng
That for abyeth al this thyng
And yf they were of one assent
Full soone were the Rose hent
The maugre yours wolde be
And sir, of o thyng bethenketh me
Sythe ye thys man, that loueth you
Han sayde suche harme, and shame also
Wytteth well, yf he greued it
Ye maye well demen in your wyt
He nolde nothynge loue you so
Ne callen you hys frende also
But nyghte and daye he wolle wake
The castell to dystroye and take
Yf it were sothe, as ye deuyse
Or some manne in some maner wyse
Wyght it warne hym euerydele
Or by him selfe parceyue wele
For sythe he myght not come and gone
As he was wont him more to done
He myghte it soone wyte and se
But no we all otherwyse wote he
Than have we syr all betterly
Deserued helle, and tolyly
The derke of helle dourielle
That thrallen folke so gyltelle.

False Semblant so proueth thys thynge
That he can none answeryng
And seeth alwaye, suche apparaunce
That nyghe he fel in repentaunce
And sayd hym, sir it maye wel be
Semblant, a good man semen ye
And Abstynence, ful wyse ye seme

Of o talent you bothe I deme
What counsayle wol ye to me yeuen
Myght here anon thou shalt be hyyren
And say thy tyme, whilpout more
Of this shalt thou repent sore
For I am prest, and haue poste
To shriue folke of moste dignite
That ben as wyde as worlde may dure
Of al this worlde I haue the cure
And that had neuer yet persoun
Ne vycarie of no manet toun
And god wot I haue of the
Thousande tymes more pyte
Than hath thy prest parochial
Though he thy frende be special
I haue auauntage in o wyse
That your pyeriates ben not so wyse
Ne halfe so lettred (as am I)
I am yermid boldely
In diuinite for to rede
And to confessen out of dede
Yf ye wol you nowe confesse
And leaue your synnes more and lesse
Without abode, knele downe anon
And you shal haue absolucion.

Finis.

Here endeth the Romaunt of the Rose: And here followeth the boke of Troylus and Creseyde.

Troylus and Creseyde

The double sorow of Troylus to tellen
That was kynge Priamus sonne of Troy
In louing, how his auentures fellen
From wo to wele, & after out of joy
My purpose is, er that I parte froy
Thou Thesiphone, thou helpe me for to endite
These woful versis, that wepen as I wryte

To the I clepe, thou goddesse of torment
Thou cruel furye, sorowyng euer in payne
Helpe me that am the sorowful instrument
That helpeth louers, as I can complayne
For wel syt it, the soth for to sayne
A woful wight to haue a drery fere
And to a sorowful tale a sory chere

For I that god of loues seruauntes serue
Ne dare to loue, for myne vnlykelynesse
Prayen for spede, al shulde I therfore sterue
So sarre am I fro his helpe in derkenesse
But natheles, if thyg may done gladnesse
To any louer, and his cause auayle
Haue he my thanke, and myne be the trauayle

But ye louers that bathen in gladnesse
Yf any drope of pyte in you be
Remembreth you of passed heuinesse
That ye haue felte, and on the aduersite
Of other folke, and thynketh how we that ye
Han felte, that loue durste you displease
Or ye han won him with to great an ease

And prayeth for hem that ben in the cace
Of Troylus, as ye may after here
That he hem bryngc in heuen to solace
And eke for me prayeth to god so dere
That I haue myght to shew in some manere
Suche payne and wo, as louers folke endure
In Troylus vnsely auenture

And biddeth eke for hem that ben dispeyred
In loue, that neuer wyl recouerd be
And eke for hem that falsely ben apeyred
Through wycked tonges, be it he or she
Thus byddeth god for hys benygnyte
So graūt hē soone out of this worlde to pace
That ben dispayred out of louers grace

And byddeth eke for hem that ben at ease

That god hem graūt aye good perſeuerāce
And ſende hem grace her loues for to pleate
That is to loue be worſhyp and pleſaunce
For ſo hope I my ſelfe beſt to ſauaunce
To pray for hem, that loues ſeruauntes be
And wyte her wo, and lyue in charite

And for to haue of hem compaſſyoun
As though I were her owne brother dere
Nowe herkeneth with a good entencioun
For nowe wol I go ſtreight to my matere
In whiche ye may the double ſorowes here
Of Troylus, in louynge of Creſeyde
And howe ſhe forſoke him er̄ ſhe deyde.

IT is wel wiſt, how ỳ the grekes ſtrōge
In armes vb a thouſande ſhippes mete
To Troye wardes, and the cite longe
Beſiegeden oyghe ten yeres er they lete
And in dyuers wyſe, and one entent
The rauiſhyng to wreke of quene Helayne
By Parys don, they wroughten al her peyne

Now fell it ſo, ỳ in the towne there was
Dwellyng a lorde of great auctorite
A great diuyne, that cleped was Calcas
That in that ſcience ſo experte was, that he
Knewe wel, that Troye ſhulde diſtroyed be
By anſwere of his god, that hyght thus
Dan Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus

So whan this Calcas knew by calculyng
And eke by the anſwere of this god Apollo
That grekes ſhulde ſuche a people wynne
Thorowe whiche that Troy muſt be forbrent
He caſte anone out of the towne to go
For wel he wiſt by ſorte, that Troye ſholde
Diſtroyed be, ye wolde who ſo nolde

Wherfore to departen ſoftely
Toke purpoſe ful this forknowyng wyſe
And to the Grekes hoſt ful prīely
He ſtate anone, and they in curteis wyſe
Dyd him both worſhyp and ſeruyce
In truſt that he hath connyng hem to rede
In euery peryl, which that was to drede

Great rumour roſe, whan it was firſt eſpied
Thorowout al the towne, and openly was ſpoken
That Calcas traytour fled was and alyed
Vnto hem of Grece, for cauſe was to be wroken
On him, that falſly hath his fayth broken
And ſayde ande al his kynne atones
Were worthy to be brent both fel and bones

Now had Calcas before this myſchaunce
Vnwyſ of this falſe and wicked dede
A doughter, with hir̄ was in gouernaunce
And of her hyſe ſhe was ful fore adrad
And wyſt neuer what was best hir̄ to rede
And as a widowe was ſhe forgrand al alone
And nyſt to whō ſhe might make her mone

Creſeyde was this ladyes name aright
As to my dome, in al Troyes cyte
Moſt fayreſt lady, for paſſynge euery wight
So angelyke ſhone her goodly beaute
That no mortal thynge ſemed ſhe
And therwith was ſhe ſo pertin a creature
As ſhe had be made in ſeruyce of nature

This lady, that al day herde at eare
Her fathers ſhame falſched, and treaſoun
(Ful nygh out of hyr wyt for ſorow & feare
In wydowes habite large of ſtature dyde)
Before hyr eyen bothe ſyt adoun
His mercy bad, her ſelfe excuſyng
With pyteous voice, and tenderly wepyng

Now was this Hector pyteous of nature
And ſawe, that ſhe was ſorowful begone
And that ſhe was ſo fayre a creature
Of his goodneſſe he gladed her anone
And ſaid: let youre fathers treaſon gone
Forth with myſchaunce, & ye youre ſelfe in ſoye
Dwelleth with vs, while you lyſt in Troye

And al ỳ honour, ỳ men may do you haue
As ferforth as thou; youre father dwelt here
Ye ſhul haue, and youre body ſhul men ſaue
As fer as I may ought enquyre and here
And ſhe him thanked with ful humble chere
And after wolde and it had ben his wyl
Take her leaue, went home and bode her ſtyl

And in her houſe ſhe abode with ſuch meyne
As eyl her honour fer̄ was to holde
And while ſhe was dwellyng in that cyte
She kept her eſtate, & of yonge and olde
Ful well beloued, and wel men of her tolde
But whether that ſhe children had or none
I rede it nat, therfore I let it gone

The thynges fellen as they don of werre
Betwyxen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte
For ſome day boughte they of Troye it derre
And

And

And eke the grekes founden nothyng soft
The folke of Troye: & thus fortune alofte
And vnder eke gan hem to whelmen bothe
After her course, aye whyle ỹ they wer wroth

But howe this towne came to distruccion
Me falleth not to purpose me to tel
For it were a longe digression
Fro my mater, and you to longe to dwel
But the Troyan gestes, as they fel
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dyte
Who so ỹ can, may rede hem as they wryte.

But though the grekes hem of Troy shetten
And her cite besieged al aboute
Her olde usages nolde they not letten
As to honouren her goddes ful deuoute
But ay dermost in honour out of doute
They held a crisyne hyght Palladyon
That was her trust abouen euerychon

And so befel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Apryl, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty hewe the pryme
And swete smellyng floures whyte and rede
In sondrye wise shewed as I rede
The folke of Troy, their observaunces olde
Palladions fest went for to holde

Vnto the temple in al their best wyse
Generally there went many a wyght
To herken of Palladions seruyce
And namely many a lusty knyght
And many a lady fresh, and mayden bryght
Ful wel arayde bothe moste and leest
Bothe for the seson and the hye feest

Amonge these other folke was Creseyda
In widdowes habite blacke: but natheles
Right as our first lettre is nowe an a
In beaute first, so stode she makeles
Her goodly lokyng gladded al the pres
Nas never sene thyng to be praysed so derre
Nor vnder cloude blake so bright a sterre

As was Creseyde, they sayden euerychone
That her beheelde in her blake wede
And yet she stode ful lowe and styl alone
Behynde other folke in litel stede
And nye the doze vnder shames drede
Symple of aryse, and debonayre of chere
With ful assured lokyng and manere

This Troylus as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knyghtes ladde hem vp & downe
In thylke large temple on euery syde
Beholdyng aye the ladyes of the towne
Nowe here nowe there, for no deuocyowne
Had he to none, to reuen hym his rest
But gan to prayse and lacke whom he lest

And in his walke ful faste he gan to wayten
If knyght or squier of hys companye
Gan for to syke, or let his eyen bayten
On any woman, that he coude espye
He wolde smyle, and holde it a folye
And say hem thus: O lorde the sleperh sore
For loue of the, whan thou turnest ful ofte

I haue herde tel pardieux of your lyuyng
Ye louers, & eke your lewde obseruaunces
And whiche a labour folke haue in wynning
Of loue, and in keping suche doutaunces
And whan your pray is lost, wo & penaunces
O, very fooles, blynde and nyce be ye
There is not one can ware by another be

And with ỹ worde he gan caste vp the browe
Ascaunces lo, is this not wel ỹspoken
At whiche the god of Loue gan loken rowe
Right for dispite, and shope him to be wroke
He hydde anone his bowe was not broken
For sodaynly he hitte hym at the ful
And yet as proude aspecoke gan he pul

O blinde worlde, o blinde entencion
Howe often fallerh al the effecte contrayre
Of surquedrie and foule presumpcyoun
For caught is proude, & caught is debonayre
This Troylus is clomben on the stayre
And litel weneth, that he mote descenden
But al day fayleth that fooles wenden

As proude bay ard begynneth for to skippe
Out of the way, so pricketh him his corne
Tyl he a lasshe haue of the longe whyppe
Than chikerh he, though I praise al beforne
First in the traise, ful faste & newe yhorne
Yet am I but an horse, and horses lawe
I must endure, and with my fetres drawe

So fared it by this fiers and proude knight
Though he a worthy kynges sonne were
And wende nothyng had had suche might
Ayenst his wyl, that shulde his hert stere
Yet with a loke his hert wore on fyre

That he ꝑ nowe was moste in pryde aboue
Woxe sodaynly moste subiecte vnto loue

Foꝛ thy ensample taketh of this man
Ye wyse, proude, and woꝛthy folkes al
To shoꝛnen loue, whiche that so sone can
The fredome of youꝛ herres to hym thral
Foꝛ euer it was, and euer it be shal
That loue is he that al thyng may bynde
Foꝛ no man may foꝛdo the lawe of kynde

That this be sothe, hath preued and doth yet
Foꝛ this (trowe I) ye knowe al and some
Wen reden nat that folke han greater wit
Than they, ꝑ han ben moste with loue ynome
And strengest folke ben therwith ouercome
The woꝛthyest and greatest of degre
This was and is, and yet men shal it se

And trueliche that sitte wel to be so
Foꝛ alder wisest han therwith ben plesed
And they that han ben aldermoste in wo
With loue, han ben comfoꝛted most and esed
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed
And woꝛthy folke made woꝛthyer of name
And causeth most to bꝛeden byce and shame

Nowe syth it may nat goodly be withstonde
And is a thyng so vertuous in kynde
Refuseth nought to loue, foꝛ to ben bonde
Sithe as hym seiuen lyst he may you bynde
The yerde is bette that bowen wol a wynde
Than that that brest, and therfoꝛe I you rede
Nowe foloweth him, ꝑ so wel can you lede

But foꝛ to tellen foꝛthe in speeyall
As of this kynges sonne, of which I tolde
And leuen other thyng collateꝛall
Of him thinke I, my tale foꝛthe to holde
Bothe of his ioye, and of his cares colde
And his werke, as touchyng this matere
Foꝛ I it gan, I wol therto refere

Within the tẽple he went hym foꝛth playeng
This Troylus, of euery wight aboute
On this lady, and nowe on that lokyng
Wher so he were of towne, oꝛ of without
And vpon cas befyl, that thꝛough a route
His eye pereed, and so depe it went
Tyl on Creseyde it smote, and there it stent

And sodaynly foꝛ wonder were astoned
To gan her beholde in thꝛifty wyse

O dere god thought he, wherto hast ꝑ wrought
That art so fayre, and goodly to deuyse
Therwith his herte gan to spꝛede and ryse
And softe sighed, lest men might him here
And caught ayen his first playeng chere

She nas nat with the moste of her stature
But al her lymmes so wel answering
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Was neuer lasse mannishe in semyng
And eke the pure wise of her meanyng
Shewed wel, that men might in her gete
Honour, estate, and womanly noblesse

Tho Troylus, right wonder wel withall
Gan foꝛ to fyxe her meanynge and her chere
Which somdele deignous was, foꝛ she let fal
Her loke alyte a syde, in sothe mannere
Astaunces, what may I nat stonden here
And after that, her lokyng gan she lyghte
That neuer thought him seme so good a sighte

And of her loke in him there gan to quicken
So gꝛete desyre, and sucht affection
That in his herte botꝛom ganto sticken
Of her his fixe, and depe impression
And though he erst had poꝛed vp and down
Than was he glad his bꝛeste in to thinke
Unnethes wist he howe to loke oꝛ winke

Lo, he that lete him seiuen so conseyng
And scoꝛned hem that loues paynes dyen
Was ful vnware that loue had his dwelling
Within the subtel stremes of her eyen
That sodaynly him thought he felte dyen
Right with her loke, the spiꝛite in his herte
Blessed be loue, ꝑ thus can folke conuerte

She this in blacke, lyked to Troylus
Quer al thyng he stode foꝛ to beholde
But his desire, ne wherefoꝛe he stode thus
He neither cheꝛe made, ne wiste tolde
But from a ferre, his maner foꝛ to holde
On other thyng somtyme his loke he caste
And ofte on her, whyle that the seruyce laste

And after this, nat fully he al awhaped
Out of the temple eteleyche he wente
Repentyng him that he euer had played
Of loues folke, lest fully the discente
Of scorne fyl on hym self, but what he ment
Lefte it were wyste on any maner syde
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde

Whan

Whā he was fro this temple thus departed
He streyght anone vnto his palays turneth
Right with her loke, thrugh thorē is darted
Al sayncly he in lufe that he totourneth
And al his chere & speche also he burneth
And aye of louers seruaūtes euery whyle
Him semeth best, as hem he gan to smyle

And sayd lorde, so they lyue al in lufe
Ye louers, for the comyngē of you
That serueth moste ententifelyche and best
Him eyre as often harme therof as prowe
Your hyre is quite ayen, ye god wote howe
Not wel for wel, but thonne for good seruise
In saythe your ordre is reuled in good wise

In no certayne ben your obseruaunces
But it a sely fewe poynres be
Ne nothing asketh so great attendaūces
As dothe your laye, and that knowe al ye
But that is not the worst, as mote I the
But telde I you the worste poynt, I leue
Al sayde I sothe, ye wolden at me greue

Yet take this, that ye louers ofte eschewe
Of this done of good entencyon
Ful ofte thy lady wol it misse construwe
And deme it harme in her opinion
And yet if she for other encheson
Be wroth, thē shalt thou haue a groin anone
Lorde, wel is him that may bene of you one

But for al this, whan that he seeth his tyme
He held his pees, non other bote him gayned
For loue began his fethers so to tyme
That wel vneth vnto his folke he fayned
That other dely nedes hym distrayned
Ne wo was hym, that what to done he nist
But bad his folke to gone where as hem list

And whan that he in chambre was alone
He bounde on his bedes fete him sette
And first he gan to sike, and eke to grone
And thought aye on her so without en lette
That as he satte and woke, his spirite mette
That he her saugh, and temple, & al the wise
Right of her loke, and ganit newe anyse

Thus gan he make a mynrone of his minde
In whiche he saugh al holy her figure
And that he wel coude in his hert finde
It was to him a right good aventure
To loue suche one, and if he did his cure
To seruen her, yet might he fal in grace
Or elis, for one of her seruauntes pace

Imagining, that creature ne grame
Ne might, for so goodly one be lorne
As she, ne hym for his desire no shame
Al were it wist, but in prise and vp borne
Of al louers, wel more than beforne
This argumented he, in his gynnyng
Ful vnauysed of his wo commyng

Thus toke he purpose loues crafte to sewe
And thought he wolde worken prively
First to hyde his desire in mewe
From euery wight yborne, al outerly
But he might ought recouered den therby
Remembring him, that loue to wide yblowe
Yelt bitter frute, though swete sede be sowe

And ouer al this, ful mokel more he thought
What for to speke, and what to holden inne
And what to arten, her to loue he sought
And on a longe anone right to beginne
And gan loude on his sorowe for to winne
For with good hope, he gan fully assente
Creseyde for to loue, and nought repente

And of his longe not onely his sentence
As write myn auctour called Lolyus
But playnely saue our tonges difference
I dare wel say, in al that Troylus
Sayed in his longe, so euery word rist thus
As I shal sayne, and who so list it here
Lo next this verse, he may it finde here

¶ The songe of Troylus

¶ If no loue is, o god what fele I so
And if loue is, what thing & whiche is he
If loue be good, frō whence cometh my wo
If it be wicke, a wonder thinketh me
Whan euery turment and aduersyte
That cometh of him, may to me sauery thinke
For aye thynk I the more that iche it drinke

And if that at myn owne lufe I brenne
Frō whēs cometh my waylig & my pleynte
If harme agree me, wherto playne I thenne
I not, ne why, anwery that I feynte
O quicke deth, o swete harme so queynte
Howe may of the in me, be suche quantyte
But if that I consente that is so be

And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Complayne ywis, thus posed to and fro

A fyre ful wythin a boste am I
I myght the fre, stwixen wyndes two
That in contrarye stonden euer mo
Alas, what is this wonder maladye
For heate of colde, for colde of heate I dye

And to the god of loue thus sayde he
With pytous voyce, O lorde nowe yours is
Thy spirite, whiche that ought yours be
Youthoke I lord, ȳ han me brought to this
But whether goddesse or woman ywis
Shr be, I not whiche, that ye do me serue
But as her man I wol aye lyue and sterue

Ye stonden in her eyen mightely
As in a place to your bertue digne
Wherfore lorde, if my seruyce or I
May lyken you, so berthe to me benigne
For myn estate royal here I resigne
Into her honde, and with ful humble chere
Become her man, as to my lady dere

In him ne deigned sparen blode royall
The fire of loue, wherefro god me bielle
Ne hym forbare in no degre for all
His bertue, or his excellent prowesse
But helde hym as his thrall lowe in distresse
And brende hym so in sondrie wyse aye newe
That sixty tymes a day he lost his hewe

So muchell day fro day his owne thought
For lufte to her, gan quicken and encrease
That euerych other charge he sette at nought
For ay ful ofte, his hotte fyre to crease
To seue her goodly loke he gan to preasse
For therby to ben eased wel he wende
And aye the nere he was, the more he brende

For aye the nere the fyre the hotter is
This (trowe I) knoweth al this company
But were he fette or nere, I dare say this
By nyght or daye, for wisdome or folye
His herte, whiche that is his brestes eye
Was aye on her, that fayrer was to seue
Than euer was Helayn, or Polixene

Eke of the day there passed nat an houre
That to him selfe a thousande tyme he seyde
God goodly, to whom I serue and laboure
As I best can, nowe wolde god Cresseyde
Ye wolden on me rewe, er that I deyde
Or bere herte alas, myn herte and hewe
And life is lofte, but ye wol on me rewe

Al other dedes weren from hym fledde
Both of chyualrye, and his saluacion
Ne in defyse non other fowles bredde
But arguinentes to hys confusion
That she on hym wolde han compassion
And he to ben her man, whyle he may dure
Lo here his lyfe, and fro his herte his cure

The sharpe shoures fel, of armes yerne
That Hector or his other brethren dyden
Ne made hym only the more ones merne
And yet was he, wher so men went or ryden
Fonde one the beste, and lengest tyme abyden
There perill was, and eke did suche trauayle
In armes, that to thynke it was meruayle

But for none hate he to the grekes had
Ne also for the rescous of the roun
Ne made he thus in armes for to mad
But onely lo, for this conclusioun
To lyken her the bet for his renoun
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde
That the grekes as the herte hym dredde

And fro this forth tho reft him loue his fere
And made his meate his foe, and eke his sorow
Gan multyplye, that who so toke kepe
It shewed in his hewe both eue and morow
Therfore tyrie he gan hym for to borowe
Of other sickenesse, lest men of him wende
That the hotte fyre of loue hym brende

And sayde he had a feuer, and fared amys
But were it certayne I can nat say
If that his lady vnderstode nat thys
Or fayned her she nyst, one of the tweye
But wel trow I, that by no maner weye
Ne semed it that she on hym cought
Or of his payne, what so euer he thought

But than felte thys Troylus suche wo
That he was wo nigh wod, for aye his dede
Was this, that she some wight loued so
That neuer of hym she wolde han take hede
For whiche hym thought he felte hert blede
Ne of his wo ne durst he nought begynne
To tellen her, for al this worlde to wynne

But whan he had a space from his care
Thus to him selfe ful ofte he gan to playne
He sayde, o foole nowe art thou in the snare
That whylom lapedest at loues payne
Nowe art ȳ hent, nowe gnaw thin owne chayne

Thou

thou were eye wonedeth the loner repedde
Of hym for whiche thou canst nat ꝑ defede

What woll nowe euery louer sayne of the
Troylus be wyse, but euer in thyn absence
Laughen in scorne, and sayne lo ther goth he
That is the man of great sapience
That helde vs louers lesse in reuerence
Now thanked be god, he may gon on ꝑ daunce
Of hem that loue lyke febly ataunce

Now o thou woful Troylus, god wolde
Sythe thou must louen, through thy destine
That thou hest were on such one, ꝑ sholde
Reuse al thy wo, al lacked her pyte
But alle colde in loue towardes the
Thy lady is, as frost in wynter moone
And thou for do, ag snowe in fire is soone

God wolde I were aryued in the porte
Of herde, to whiche my sorowe wol me lede
Anone, to me it were a great comforte
Than were I quite of languysshing in drede
For by my hyd sorowe yblowe in drede
I dai dclaped ben a thousande tyme
More than ꝑ foole, of whose folye men tyme

Now helpe god, and ye swete, for whom
I playne, I rought ye neuer wight so false
O mercy dere herte, and helpe me from
The deth, for I, while that my life may lasse
Shew thē my trife woll loue you to my lasse
And with same frēdly loke gladerthme swete
Though neuer more thyng ye me byhete

¶ Thise wordes, and full many an other mo
He spake, and called euer in hys complaynte
Her name, for to telien her hys wo
Tyl nighe that he in salte teeres dreynte
Al was for nought, she herd nat his playnte
And when that he bethought on that folye
A thousande folde his wo gan multyplye

Bewaylyng in hys chambre thus alone
A frende of hys, that called was Pandare
Came ones in vnware, and herde him grone
And sawe his wepe in suche distresse ꝑ care
Alas (qꝺ he) who causeth al thys fare
O mercy god, what vnhap may thys mene
Hauuowe thus sone gretes made you lene

Or hastē thou some remorse of conscience
And arte nowe fal in some deuocyon
And wayleste for thy synne and thyn offence
And haste for ferde cought contrycioun
God saue hem, that besieged han our toun
That so can lay our folyte on presse
And bring our lusty folde to holynesse

Thise wordes sayde he for the nones all
That vñ such thyg he myght him angry maken
And with his anger don his sorowe fall
As for a tyme, and his corage awaken
But wel wyste he, as ferre as tonges spoken
There nas a man of greater hardynesse
Than he, ne more defyzed worthynesse

¶ What cas (qꝺ Troylus) or what auenture
Hath gyded the to seme me languysshyng
That am refuse of euery creature
But for the loue of god, at my prayeng
Go hence away, for certis my deieng
Wol the displese, and I more nedes dey
Therfore go way, there nys no more to sey

But if thou were I be thus sicke for drede
It is nat so, and ther for scorne nought
There is another thyng I take of hede
Wel more the ought ꝑ grehes han yet wrought
Which cause is of my derk for sorow ꝑ thought
But though that I nowe tel it the ne lesse
Be thou nat wrothe, I hyde it for the beste

This Pādare, ꝑ nigh maist for wo ꝑ routhe
Ful often sayde alas, what may this be
Nowe frende (qꝺ he) if euer loue or trouthe
Hath ben er this betwyxen the and me
Ne do thou neuer suche a cruelte
That hyden fro thy frende so great a care
Wolde thou not wel that I am Pandare

I wol parten with the al thy payne
If it so be I do the no comforte
As it is frendes right, for the for to sayne
To enterparten wo, as glad disporte
I haue and shal, for trewe or false reporte
In wronge and right ploued the al my lyue
Hyde not thy wo fro me, but tel it blyue

Than gan this sorowful Troylus to syke
And sayde him thus, God leue it be my best
To telien the, for sythe it may the lyke
Yet wol I tel it, though my hert brest
And wel wote I, thou maist do me no rest
But lest thou deme I trust nat to the
Nowe herke frend, for thus it stant with me

Loue

Loue, ayenst the whiche who so defendeth
Hym seluen moste, hym alderlest auayleth
Wolde dispeyre so sorowfully me offendeth
That streight vnto the deth myn herte sayleth
Therto delyte, so bytwyxyngly me assayleth
That to den slayne it were a greater ioye
To me, thā dyng of Grece be and of Troye

Hyt lyketh thys, my ful frende Pandare
That I haue sayd, for now woteth hyt my wo
And for the loue of god my colde care
So hyde it wel, I tolde it neuer to mo
For harmes mighten folowen me than two
If it were wyst, but be thou in gladnesse
And let me sterue vnknowe of my distresse

Howe hast e thou thus vnkyndly a longe
Hid this fro me, thou foole (qō Pandarus)
Paraventure hyt mayst after suche one longe
That myn auyse anon may helpen bs
This were a wonder thinge (qō Troylus)
Thou couldest neuer in sbue thy selfen wysse
Howe dyurl mayst hyt dyngen me to blisse

Ye Troylus, nowe herke (qō Pandare)
Though I be myce, it happeth often so
That one that axes bothe ful yurl fare
By good counsaile can kepe his frende therfro
I haue my-selfe seyne a blynde man go
There as he fel, that couide loken wyde
A foole may ebe a wyse man ofte gyde

A whetstone is no keruynge instrument
But yet it maketh sharpe keruyng tolis
And ther thou wost hyt I haue aught mis-went
Eschue thou hyt, for suche thing to schole is
Thus often wise men ben waren by foolis
If thou so do, thy wyt is well bewared
By this contrary is euery thyng declared

For how mist euer swetnesse haue be knowe
To him, that neuer tasted bytternesse
No man wot what gladnesse is I trowe
That neuer was in sorowe, or some distresse
Ebe white by blacke, by shame ebe worthy-
Ech set by other, more for other semeth (nesse
As men may sene, and so the wyse is demeth

Hyt be thus of two contraryes is a lore
I that haue in loue so ofte assayed
Trewantes, ought connen wel the more
Counsayien the, of that thou art dismayde
And ebe the ne ought not ben euyl apayde
Though I bidde with the for to bide
Thyn hevy charge, it shal the lasse dere

I wote wel that it fared thus by me
As to thy brother Paris, an hyerdesse
Whiche that cleped was Oenone
Wrote in a complaynte of her heuynesse
Ye sawe the letter that she wrote, I gesse
Nay neuer yet ywis (qō Troylus)
Nowe (qō Pandare) herkeneth it was thus

Phebus, that first fonde art of medycyne
(Wō for) and conde in euery wightes care
Remedy and rede, by herbes he knewe fyne
Yet to him selfe hys conyng was ful bare
For loue had hym so bounden in a snare
Al for the doughter of kyng Thamete
That al hys crafte ne coude his sorowe bete

Right so fare I, vnhappy for me
I loue one best, and that me deereth sore
And yet paraventure I can rede the
And nat my selfe, tru hyt me no more
I haue no cause I wot wel for to sore
Ne dorh an haukē, that lysteth for to play
But to thyn helpe, yet somwhat can I say

And of o thyng, right syker mayst thou be
That trewe-ne, for to dyen in the payne
That I ne neuer mo discouer the
Ne by my trouth, I kepe nat destreyne
The fro thy loue, although it were peyne
That is thy brothers wyfe, yf ybe it wyfe
Be what he be, and loue her as thy lyfe

Therfore, as frendfully ebe in me assure
And tel me plaine, what is thyn enchesun
And fynal cause of wo, that ye endure
For douteth nothyng, myn entencyon
Nas not to yon of vnryghtfulnesse
To speke as nowe, for no wighte may byleue
A man to loue, tyl that hym lyke to leue

And weteth well, that bothe two ben vices
Mystrusten al, or elis al leue
But wel I wote, the meane of it no vice is
As for to trusten some wyght is a preue
Of trouth, & for thy wolde I fayn meene
Thy wroge cōcyte, & do the some wist trust
Thy wo to tel, and tel me if the lust

The wise ebe sayth, wo hym that is alone
For and he fal, he hath none helpe to ryse

And

And sithe thou hast a feldwe, tel thy mone
For this nyght nought certaynly the next wyfe
To wynnen lone, as techen vs the wise
To walowe and wepe, as Niobe the quene
Whose teres yet in marbie bene ysene

Let be thy wepyng, and thy bysynesse
And let vs lysten wo, with other speche
So may thy wofull tyme sone ieffe
Delyte nought in wo, thy wo to seche
Is done thele fooles, that her sorowes eche
With sorow, whan they han misaventure
And lusten nought to sechen other cure

Wen sayne to wretche is consolacion
To haue another felowe in his payne
That ought wel ben our opinyon
For bothe thou and I of lone playne
So ful of sorowe am I, soothe to sayne
That certaynly, no more harde grace
May lyt on me, for why there is no space

Yf god wol, thou art nought agast of me
Lest I wold of thy lady the begyle
Thou wost thy selfe, who that I lone parde
As I best can, gon sythen longe whyle
And sythen thou wost, I do it for no wyle
And sithe I am he, that thou trustest most
To me somwhat, sens al my wo thou woste

Yet Troylus, for al this no worde sayde
But longe he lay stylle, as he deed were
And after this, with sykyng he abrayde
And to Pandarus voice he lent his ere
And vp his eyen caste he, and than in fere
Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
He shulde fal, or elis sone dye

And said a wake, ful wonderlyche ysharpe
What sloumbrest thou, as in a lytargye
Or art thou lyke an asse to the harpe
That nedeth soun, whan men ỳ stringes plye
But in his minde, of that nameiodye
May lyuke him to gladen, for that he
No dull is, in his bestialyte

And with this, Pandare of his wordes stente
But Troylus to him no thyng answerde
For why, to tel was nought his entent
Nemer to no man, for whom that he so ferde
For it is tryd, men maken ofte a yerde
Wyth which the maker is him selfe ybeten
In sondrie maner, as these wise treten

And nameliche in his counsayle tellyng
That toucheth lone, that ought ben secre
For of him selfe it woll ynough out spryng
But if that it the bet gouerned be
Eke somtyme it is crafte to feme slee
For thing, whiche in effecte men hunten faste
Al this gan Troylus in his harte caste

But natheleſſe, whan he had herde him cry
A wake he gan, and syke wonder sore
And said frende, though that I slyll lye
I nam nor deefe, nowe peace & crie no more
For I haue herde thy wordes, and thy lore
But suffre me my fortune to bewayen
For thy prouerbes may nought me auayen

Nor other cure canste thou none for me
Eke I nyll not ben cured, I woll dye
What knowe I of the quene Niobe
Let be thyne olde ensamples, I the prey
No frende (quod Pandarus) therfore I sey
Suche is delite of fooles to bewepe
Her wo, but seken boote they ne kepe

Nowe know I that reson in the sayeth
But tell me, if I wyste what she were
For whome that the al misaventure ayleth
Durste thou that I tolde it in her ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy selfe for feere
And her besought, on the to han some routhe
Why nay (quod he) by god and by my trouthe

What, not as bestly (quod Pandarus)
As though myne owne lyfe lay in this nede
Why no parde sir (quod this Troylus)
And why, for that thou shuldest neuer spede
Wost thou that wel: ye that is out of drede
(Quod Troylus) for al that euer ye conne
She wol to no suche wretche as I be wonne

(Quod Pandarus) alas what may this be
That thou dispayred art, thus causeleſſe
What, lyueth nat thy lady, benedicite
Howe wost thou so, that thou art graceleſſe
Suche yuel is not alwaye botteleſſe
Why put not impossyble thus thy cure
Sythe thyng to come is ofte in aventure

I graunt wel that thou enduresi wo
As sharpe as doth he Tesiphus in hell
Whose stomake foules eyren euer mo
That byghten vultures, as bokes tell
But I may not endure that thou dwell

In to bothsyful an opinion
That of thy wo sig no curacyon

But onely syl thou, for thy cowarde herte
And for thyne ire, and folysshe wylfulnesse
For wantrust tellen of thy sorowes smerte
Ne to thyne owne helpe, do besynesse
As moche as speke a worde, ye more or lesse
But syest as he that of lyfe nothyng reccheth
What woman coude loue fro hym a wrecche

What may she demen other of thy dethe
Yf thou thus dye, and she not why it is
But that for feare, is polden vp thy brethe
For grekes han besieged dardanis
Lorde which a thäke shalt þ haue thē of this
Thus wol she sayne, & al the towne at ones
The wrecche is dead, þ dyuel haue his bones

Thou mayst alone here wepe, crye, & knele
But loue a woman that she wote it nought
And she wol quite it that thou shalt not fele
Unknowe vnkyst, and lost that is vnsought
What many a man hath loue ful dere abought
Twenty wynter that his lady me wyste
That neuer yet his ladyes mouthe he kyste

What, shulde he therfore fallen in dispayre
Or he retreamme for his owne tene
Or slayne him selfe, al be his lady fayre
Nay nay: but euer in one he freshe & grene
To serue and loue, his dere hertes quene
And thynke it is a guerdone her to serue
A thousande parte more, than he can deserue

And of that worde toke hede Troylus
And thought anone, what folye he was in
And howe that forthe him sayde Pandarus
That for to slern him self, mighte he not wyn
But bothe done vnmanhode and a syn
And of his dethe his lady nought to wyte
For of his wo, god wot she knewe ful lyte

And with þ thought, he gan ful sore syke
And sayd, Alas: what is me best to do
To whom Pandare said, yf eye lyke
The best is, that thou tel me thy wo
And haue my trouth, but if thou fynde it so
I be thy bote, or it be ful longe
To peces do me drawe, and sythen honge

Ye, so sayst thou (qō Troylus) alas
But god wot it is naught the rather so
Ful harde it were to helpen in this cas
For wel fynde I, that fortune is my fo
Ne al the men that ryde or go
May of her reuel wheele the barne wirthdrawe
For as her lyst, she playeth with fre & bonde

(Qō Pandarus) than blamest thou fortune
For thou art wroth, y nowe at erst I se
Wost thou not well that fortune is comune
To euery manes wight, in some degre
And yet thou hast this comforte, lo parde
That as her loues mote nedes gone
So moue her sorowes passen euerychone

For lyther wheele thynt, may chynge to torne
Than cesseth the fortune anone to be
Now sith her wheele by no way may soiourne
What wost thou if her mutabylite
Ryght as thy selues lasse wol don by the
Or that she be nought ferer fro thyn helping
Parauenture thou hast cause for to synge

And therfore wost thou what, I the beseche
Let be thy wo, and turnyng to the grounde
For why to lyte haue bealyng of his leche
To him bihoueth hyst vnwyse hys wounde
To Cerberus in hel aye be I bounde
Were it for my lasser al thy sorowe
By my wyl she shulde be thyne to morowe

Loke vp I say, and tel me whet she is
Anon, that I may gon about thy nede
Knowe she her aught, for my loue tel me this
Than wold I hope rather for to spede
Tho gan the veyne of Troylus to bleede
For he was hyt, and wore al reed for shame
Ha (qō Pandare) here begynneth game

And with that worde, he gan him for to shake
And sayde theefe, thou shalt her name tell
But tho gan sely Troylus for to quake
As though men shuld han had hym in to hell
And said alas, of al my wo the well
Than is my swete for called Creseyde
And wel nygh wt that worde for feare he deide

And whan þ Pādare herd her name neuen
Lorde he was glad, and sayde, frende so dere
Now fare a ryght, for Ioues name in heuen
Loue hath beset the wel, be of good chere
For of good name, & wysedom, and maners
She hath ynough, and eke of gentylesse
If she be fayre, thou wost thy selfe I gesse

Be never fey a mape bountrous
Of her estate, ne a gladerere of speche
I sothfyet, be more gracious
For to do wel, ne lasse had nede to seche
Ayeyns for to don, and al this bet to eche
In honour, so as ferre as she may stretche
I lyenges herte stondeth by hers a wytnesse

And for thy lorde of good comforte thou be
For certainly the first poynte is this
Of noble corage, and werke ordayne the
A man to have peace with him self ywis
Ne oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To loven wel, and in a worthy place
The aught not elepe it happe, but grace

And also thynke, and therwith glad the
That sely thy lady dere nouy is al
So fole wery it, that there is some pyte
Amonges al these other in general
And for they se that thou in special
Requere nought, that is ayen her name
For vertue stretcheth not him self to shame

But wel is me, that ever I was borne
That thou bescr art in so good a place
For by my trouth I lone I durst have swore
The shuld never have tydde so faire a grace
And wost why, for she were wont to chace
Al love in scorne, and for despite he cal
Saint Idiote, lorde of these fooles al

Howe often hast thou made thy mery tapes
And said, that lones servauntes everychone
Of verite, ben very goddes apes
And some wolde monch her meate alone
Liggyng a bedde, & make hem for to grone
And some thou saydest had a blaunche feuere
And prayedest god, they shulde never keuere

And some of hem, toke on hem for the colde
More than ynough, so saydest thou full ofte
And some han sayned ofte tyme and tolde
How that they waken, whan they slepe softe
And thus they wold have set hem self a lofte
And natheles were wonder ar the last
Thus saydest thou, and tapedest ful fast

Yet saydest thou, that for the more parte
These lovers wolde speke in general
And thoughten it was a fayer arte
For sayyng for to assayen ouer al
Now may I tape of the, if that I shal
But natheles, though that I shulde dey
Thou art nose of tho, I dare wel sey

Now bere thy heed, and say to god of Lone
Thy grace lorde, for wowe I me repent
Yf I mysspake, for now my self I lone
Thus say with al thyne her, in good entent
(Quod Troylus) ah lorde, I me confent
And pray to the, my tapes thou forgene
And I shal never more whyle I lyue

Thou saist wel (qd Pandare) & nowe I hope
That thou the goddes wrath hast al apesed
And sythe thou hast wepten many a drope
And sayd such thig, wherin thy god is plesed
Now wold never god, but thou were eased
And thynke wel she, of whom rest all thy wo
Here after may thy comforte ben also

For thilke grounde, þ beareth þ wedes wicke
Beareth eke these holsome herbes, as ful oft
Next the foule nettle, rough and thicke
The rose wexeth, soote, smoth, and softe
And next the valey is the hyll a lofte
And next the derke night the glade morowe
And also hope is next the tyne of sorowe

Nowe loke that attempte be thy bydel
And for the best aye suffre to the tyde
Or elis al our labour is on ydel
He hasteth wel, that wysely can abyde
Be dyligent and trewe, and aye wel hyde
Be lusty, free, persteuer in thy servyse
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wise

But he that departed is in every place
Is no where hole, as writen clerkes wyse
What wonder is, if suche one have no grace
Eke wost thou how it fareth of some seruice
As plante a tree or herbe, in sondry wyse
And on the morowe put it up as blyue
No wonder is, though it may never thryue

And syth that god of love hath the bestowed
In place digne unto thy worthynesse
Beonde fast, for to good porte hast þ rowed
And of thy self, for any heynesse
Hope alway wel, for but if dyerynesse
Or ouer hast our both labour shende
I hope of this to maken a good ende

And wost thou why, I am the lasse afered
Of this mater, with my nece trete

For this cause I herde hym alwaye lende
And was hys counsaylle moost of any kynde
That was bysyde to saluen Iones here
Creseyda, my dere lorde of hynde
For thy sonne grace I hope in her to fynde

And for an hyde of her in speciall
Her vnkle to destroyen, and her parente
It syt her nought, so ben celestyall
As yet, though that her lyste bowe a lyttle
And trewly it syt her wel right nought
I worthy knyght to louen and cherice
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce

Wherfore I am, and wol be eye redy
To payne me to do you thys seruice
For both you to please, this hope I
Here after, for ye ben bothe wyse
And con it counsayle kepe in suche a wyse
That no man shal the wiser of it be
And ye maye bene gladed all thre

And by my trouth I haue ryght good espie
A good conceit, in my wyt as I gesse
And what it is, I wol now that thou se
I thynke that sithe Love of his goodnesse
Hath the conuerted out of wickednesse
That thou shalte ben the best post I fynde
Of al his lay, and most his fors grynde

Enlampie why, se now these grete clerkes
That erren alderemost ayen a lawe
And ben conuerted from her wyched werkes
Thrugh grace of god, that lest hem to withdrawe
Thā arne they folke that hā most god i awe
And strengest fayth in herte I vnderstonde
And resyst errour alderbest withstonde

Whan Troylus had herde pandare assented
To ben his helpe, in lovyng of Creseyde
Ryght of his wo, as who sayth vnrepented
But holder was his loue, and than he sayde
With sobre cheer, as though his hert playde
Some bilful Venus helpe, er that I fynde
Of the pandare, I maye some thyng deserue

But herke me wel, by houe shal my wo be lesse
Tyl thys be done, and good eke tell me thys
Now wyte thou fayre of me and my dystresse
Lest she be wonne, this dare I make ywis
Or wol not hereat al, how it is
Me thynketh dyuerse, and eke for the manere
Of the her speche, the wyl no suche styrryng here

(Ah pandarus) thou hast a full great care
Lest the chorle may fal out of the mone
By lorde, I leue of the the nine fare
Why, nyfle ye of thus thou hast to doone
For goddes loue, I byd the a boone
Holde me alone, and it shal be thy best
Why frende (ah he) than bote right as the lest

But herke pandare a worde, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so great folye
That to my lade I hadde no thynge holde
That toucheth harme, of any dylaunye
For by the heyght of myne herte hele
Than the of me aboght thy vnkyndhood
But that thou might fynden in good

The lough this pandarus, & anon answerde
And I thy borowe, lyte no wyght hoch but so
I raught not though the foode and herde
How that thou farest, but farwel I wol go
I dieu, be glad, god spede vs both two
Yeue me this labour, and this bysinesse
And (my spede) be thyne al the swetnesse

Tho Troylus gan bothe on knees to fal
And pandare in his armes bothe fast
And sayde, now fye on fyre gredy al
Yet pardie, god shal helpen at last
And hyr beleue, if that my lyfe may last
And god to loue, to some of hem shal tyme
And yet me whyleth this auenture maketh

Nowe pandare, I am no more thy
Thou wyse, thou wost, thou myght, & art al
My lyfe, my deth, lyth in thyne hond be I lyue
Helpe me now (ah he) Yes by my trouth I
God yelde the frende, & this in couert (shal
(Ah Troylus) that thou me recommaunde
Teche that may me to the deth comaunde

¶ This pandarus tho, determyned to serue
His ful frende, he sayde in this maner
Farwel, & thynke I wol the thanke deserue
Haue here my trouth, & that thou shalt here
And went his way, thinkyng on thys matere
And how he best might hys speche hyr of grace
And spede a tyme therto, and a place

For every wight that hath a house to fonde
He trauayth not the werke for to begynne
With rakel honde, but he wol byde a stounde
And send his herte lyne out for to wynne
Alderfyrst his purpose, for to wynne

Al thus Pandare in his herr thought
And cast his werke, ful wysely er he wrought

But Troylus lay tho no lenger downe
But anon vp on his stede baye
And in the felde he played the lyoun
Tho was that gerke, that vn him met ȳ daye
And in the towne, his maner tho forthe aye
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace
That eche him loued, that loked in his face

For he became the frendlyest wight
The gentylest, and eke the most fre
The thrifteyest, and one the best knight
That in his tyme was, or myght be
Ferd were his lapes and his crueltie
His hygh porte, and his maner straunge
And eche of hem, gan for a bettre chaunge

Now let vs ryne of Troylus a stounde
That sareth lyke a man, that hurt is sore
And is somdele of abyng of his wounde
Yheled well, but heled no dele more
And as an esy patient the lore
Were, of him that goth about his cure
And thus he dryueth forth his auenture.

Explicit liber primus.

Out of these blacke wawes for to sayle
O wynde, the weder gynneth clere
For in ȳ see, the bote hath such trauayle
Of my conning, that vneth I it stere
This see clepe I the tempestous matere
Of disspayre, that Troylus was in
But nowe of hope the kalendes begyn

O lady myne that called art Cleo
Thou be my spede fro this forthe, & my muse
To ryme wel this boke tyl I haue do
Me nedeth here none other art to vse
For why, to euery louer I me excuse
That of no sentement I this endyte
But out of latyn, in my tonge it wryte

Wherfore I nyl haue neither thake ne blame
Of al this wo[r]ke, but prayen you mekely
Disblameth me, if any word be lame
For as myne auctour sayd, so say I
Eke though I speake of loue vnfeyngely
No wonder is, for it no thynge of newe is
A ploude man can not endyten wel in hewis

I knowe that in forme of speche is chaunge
Within a thousande yere, and wordes tho
That hadde prise, now wo[n]den nyce & straunge
Thynketh hem, and yet they spake hem so
And spedde as wel in loue, as men now we do
Eke for to wynnen loue, in sondry ages
In sondry londes, sondry ben vsages

And for thy, if it happe in any wyse
That here be any louer in thys place
That herkeneth, as the story wol deuyse
Howe Troylus came to his ladyes grace
And thynketh, so nolde I not loue purchace
Or wondreth on his speche or his doyng
I not, but it is to me no wondryng

For euery wight, whiche that to Rome went
Haith nat o pathe, ne alway o manere
Eke in some londe were al the gamen shent
Yf that men lacde in loue, as men don here
Is thus, in open doyng or in chere
In visityng, in forme, or sayd our sawes
For thy me sayne, eche co[n]tre hath his lawes

Eke scarsely ben there in this place thre
That haue in loue sayd lyke, and done in al
For to this purpose this maye lyken the
And the right nought, yet al is done or shal
Eke some men graue in tre, some in stone wal
As it betyde, but sith I haue begonne
Myne authour shal I folow, as I konne.

Explicit Prohemium.

In May ȳ mother is of moncthes glade
That freshe flours, blew white, and rede
Ben queyke ayen, ȳ wynter dede made
And full of baume is fletyng euery mede
Whā Phebus doth her bright beames spred
Right in the white Bole, it so betydde
As I shal synge, on Mayes day the thridde

That Pandarus for all his wise speche
Felte eke his parte of loues shotes kene
That coude he neuer so wel of louyng preche
It made his hewe a daye ful ofte grene
So hope it, that him fyl that daye a tene

In youre, for whiche in wyte ye be wente
And made er it were day ful many a wente

The swalow Progne, with a sorowful lay
Whil morow come, gan make her wormenting
Why she forshapen was, and every lay
Pandare a bed, half in a slomberyng
Til she so nyghe him made her waymentyng
How Tereus gan forth her suster take
That with the noyse of her he gan awake

And to cal, and dresse him up to ryse
Remembryng him, his erande was to done
From Troylus, and eke his great empryse
And cast, & knewe in good plyte was ỳ mone
To done voyage, and toke his way full soone
Unto his neces paleys, there besyde
Nowe Janus god of entre, thou him gyde

Whan he was come unto his neces place
Where is my lady, to her folke (quod he)
And they him tolde, and in forthe in gan pace
And founde two other ladyes syt and she
Within a paned parlour, and they thre
Herden a mayden hem reden the geste
Of the siege of Thebes, whyle hem leste

(Quod Pandarus) madame god you se
With your boke, and al the companye
Eighe uncle myne, welcome trwys (quod she)
And up the rose, and by the honde in hye
She toke him fast, and layd, this night thryve
To good mote it turne, of you I mette
And with ỳ worde, she down on bedde him sette

Ye nece, ye shul faren wel the bet
Yf god wol al this yere (quod Pandarus)
But I am sory that I haue you let
To herken of your boke ye playsen thus
For goddes loue what sayethe it, tel it us
Is it of loue, or some good ye me lere
Uncle (quod she) your maystresse is not here

With that they gonnen laugh, & tho she seyde
This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede
And we haue herd how ỳ kyng Layus deyde
Through Edippus his sonne, & al the dede
And here we stynten, at these letters rede
Howe the bysshop, as the boke can tell
Amphiorax, fyl through the grounde to hell

(Quod Pandarus) al this knowe I my selue
And al thassege of Thebes, and the care
For herof ben there makers bokes thre clere
But let be thys, and tel me howe ye fare
Do way your barbe, & shewe your face bare
Do way your boke, rise up & let us daunce
And let us done to May some observaunce

Eighe, god forbyd (qd she) be ye mad
Is that a wydowes lyfe, so god you saue
By god ye maken me right sore adrad
Ye bene so wylde, it semeth as ye rane
It sat me wel bet aye in a caue
To byde, and rede on holy saynctes lyues
Let maydens gon to daunce, & yonge wyues.

As euer thryue I (quod this Pandarus)
Yet couthe I tel a thing, to don you play
Nay nat twice dere (quod she) tel it us
For goddes loue, is than thassege aweye
I am of gretes ferde, so that I deye
Nay nay (qd he) as euer mote I thryue
It is a thyng wel bet than suche fyue

Ye holy god (quod she) what thing is that
What bet than suche fyue, eighe nay trwis
For al this worlde, ne can I reden what
It shulde ben, some iape I trowe it is
And but your selfe tel us what it is
My wit is for to arede it al to lerne
As helpe me god, I not what that ye meane

And I your borowe, ne neuer shal (qd he)
This thing be tolde to you, as mote I thryue
And why uncle myne, why so (quod she)
Wy god (qd he) that wol I tel as blyue
For proudest woman is there none on lyue
And ye it wyte, in al the towne of Troye
I iape nat, so euer haue I ioye

Tho gan she wondren more than before
A thousande folde, & bowne her eyen cast
For neuer sythe the tyme that she was bore
To knowen thyng, desyred she so fast
And with a syke, she said him at the last
Now uncle myne, I nyl you not displese
Nor asken more, that may do you disese

So after this, with many wordes glade
And frendly tales, and with mery chere
Of this & that they spekē, and gonnen wade
In many an unkouth glad & depe matere
As frendes done, whan they bethe yfere
Til she gan asken him how Hector ferde
That was the towres wal, & grekes yerde

ful

ful wel I thanke it god, sayde Pandarus
Saye in his armes he hath a lyte wounde
And ete hys frethe brother Troylus
The wyse worthy Hector the secounde
In whom that euery vertue lyte haboumde
As al trouthe, and al gentylesse
wyldome, honour, fredome, & worthynesse

In good faythe eme (qõ she) that lyketh me
They faren wel, god saue hem bothe two
For trewelyche, I holde it great deynte
Thynges sonne in armes wel to do
And be of good condicions therto
For great power, and moral vertue here
As selde yfene in one persone yfere

In good fayth that is sothe (qõ Pandarus)
But by my trouth, the king hath sones twey
That is to meane, Hector and Troylus
That certaynly though that I shulde dey
They ben as voyde of vices, dare I sey
As any men that lyuen vnder sonne
Her might is wide yknow, & what they cõne

Of Hector nedeth it no more for to tel
In all this worlde, there nys a better knight
Than he that is of worthynesse the wel
And he wel more vertue hath than might
This knoweth many a wyse & worthy knizt
The same pryse of Troylus I sey
God helpe me so, I knowe not suche twey

By god (qõ she) of Hector that is sothe
Of Troylus the same thyng trowe I
For dredelesse, men telleth that he dothe
In armes day by day, so worthely
And beareth hym here at home so gently
To euery wight, that al pryse hath he
Of hem that me were leuest praysed be

Ye say right sothe ywis (qõ Pandarus)
For yesterday, who so had with him ben
Myght haue wondred vpon Troylus
For neuer yet so thicke a swarme of been
Ne flewe, as grekes from hym ganne fleen
And through the felde in euery wighters ere
There was no crye, but Troylus is there

Now here, nowe there, he hunted hem so fast
There nas but grekes blode, and Troylus
Nowe hym he hurt, and him al down he cast
Ye were he wemt it was arayed thus
He was her bethe, and shelde & lyte for vs
That as that day ther durst him non withstõde
Whyle that he helde his blody swerde in honde

Therto he is the frendelyst man
Of great estate, that euer I sawe my lyue
And where hym lyste, best felowshyp can
To suche as him thinketh able for to thryue
And with that word, tho Pãdarus as blyue
He toke hys leaue, and sayd I wol gon hen
Nay, blame haue I vncle (quod she then)

What eyleth you to be thus wery soone
And namelyche of women, wol ye so?
Nay sitteth downe, by god I haue to done
With you, to speke of wisdome er ye go
And euery wight that was about hem tho
That herde that, gan ferre away to stonde
Whyle they two had al that hem lift in hond

Whan that her tale al brought was to an ende
Of her estate, and of her gouernaunce
(Quod Pandarus) now tyme is that I wende
But yet I say, aryseth let vs daunce
And cast your widowes habite to mischaũce
What lyste you thus your selfe to disfigure
Sythe you is tydde so glad an auenture

But wel bethought, for loue of god (qõ she)
Shal I nat weten what ye meane of this
No, this thing asketh leaser tho (qõ he)
And ete me wolde muche greue twis
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amys
Yet were it bette my tonge to holde styl
Than say a sothe, that were ayenst your wyl

For nece by the goddesse Mynerue
And Jupiter, that maketh the thonder ring
And the blisful Venus, that I serue
Ye ben the woman in this worlde lyuing
Withouten paramours, to my wetting
That I best loue, and lothest am to greue
And that ye weten wel your selfe I leue

Iwis myn vncle (qõ she) graunt mercy
Your frendship haue I founden euer yet
I am to no man holden trewely
So muche as you, and haue so lytel quite
And with the grace of god, emforth my wit
As in my gylte, I shal you neuer offende
And if I haue er this I wol amende

But for the loue of god, I you beseche
As ye be he, that I loue most and tryste

Let be to me your formed maner speche
And say to me your nece, what you lyst
And with that word, her vncle anon her kist
And sayd, gladly my leue nece dere
Take it for good, that I shal say you here

With that, she gan her eyen downe to caste
And Pandarus to coughe gan alyte
And sayde: Nece alway lo, lo the laste
How so it be, that some men deme dyte
With subtel art her tales for tendyte
Yet for al that in her entencyon
Her tale is al for some conclusyon

And sythe the ende is euery tales strength
And this matter is so behouely
What shulde I paint, or drawen it on length
To you that ben my frende so faythfully
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Beholden her, and loken in her face
And sayde, on suche a myrrour good grace

Than thought he thus, yf I my tale endyte
Ought harde, or make a processe any whyle
She shal no fauour haue therin but lyte
And trowe I wolde her in my wyl begyle
For tender wittes wenen al be whyle
Wher as they can not plainliche vnderstond
For thy her wit to seruen wol I fonde

And loked on her in a bely wyse
And she was ware that he beheld her so
Ah lorde (quod she) so faste ye me auyse
Saw ye me neuer er nowe, what say ye no
Yes yes (quod he) and bet wol er I go
But by my trouth I thought nowe, if ye
Be fortunate, for nowe men shal it se

For euery wight, some goodly auenture
Sometyme is shape, if he it can receyuen
But yf he nyl take of it no cure
Whē that it cometh, but wylfully it weyuen
Lo, neither taste nor fortune him deceyuen
But right his owne slouth & wrecchednesse
And suche a wight is for to blame I gesse

Good auenture, O belle nece haue ye
Ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take
And for the loue of god, and eke of me
Catche it anone, lest auenture slake
What shulde I lenger processe of it make
Deme me your hond for in this world is non
If that you lyste a wight so wel begon

And sythe I spek of good entencyon
As I to you haue told wel here before
And loue as wel your honour & renoun
As any creature in al the worlde yboren
By al the othes that I haue you sworne
And ye be wyse therfore or worse I lye
Me shal I neuer serue you vnto with eye

Beth nat agaste, ne quaketh nat, wherto
Ne chaunge nat for fere so your hewe
For hardely the worse of this is do
And though my tale as nowe be to you newe
Yet trust alway, ye shal me fynde trewe
And were it thing that me thought vnfitting
To you wolde I no suche tales bring

Nowe my good eme, for goddes loue I pray
(Qd she) come of and tel me what it is
For bothe I am agast what ye wol say
And eke me longeth it to wit ywis
For whether it be wel, or be amis
Say on, let me not in this feare dwel
Do wol I done, nowe herkeneth I shal tel

Nowe nece myn, the kynges dere sonne
The good wyse worthy, fresshe and free
Whiche alway for to done wel is his wonne
The noble Troylus so loueth the
That but ye helpe it wol hys bane be
Lo here is al, what shulde I more sey
Doth what you lyst, to make him lyue or dye

But if ye let hym dye, I wol steruen
Haue here my trouth, nece I nyl not lyen
Al shuld I with this knyfe my throte kerue
With that the teres burst out of his eyen
And sayde, if that ye done vs both dyen
Thus gyltieles, than haue ye falsed fayre
What mende ye, though p we bothe apayre

Alas, he whiche that is my lorde so dere
That trewe man, that noble gentil knyght
That naught desireth, but your frendly chere
Is for hym dyen, there he goth vpryght
And hasteth him, with al his ful myght
For to den slayne, if hys fortune assente
Alas that god you suche a beaute sente

If it be so that ye so cruel be
That of his deth you listeth nought to recch
That is so trewe and worthy, as we se
No more than of a faper or a wrecch
If ye be suche, your beaute may nat strecch

To

To make amendes of so cruel a dede
Inforces is good before the nede

Wo worthe the faye Morgane perauenture
Wo worth that herbe also that hath so bore
Wo worth the beaute that is creatiuelly
Wo worth that knight turde ashe vnd sorry
And ye that ben of beaute croppe and rote
Therwithal in you ne be no routhe
Than is harme ye leuen by my trouthe

And also thynke wel, that this is no gaude
For me were leuer, thou, Iason he
Were hanged, than I shulde ben his baude
As high as men might on hym se
I am thyne Eme, the blame were to me
As wel as the, if that I shulde assente
Through min aber, so be thin honour shente

Nowe vnderstonde, for I you nought requere
To bynde you to hym, through no bisaught
Nor euery thyng ye make hym better chere
Than ye han don er this, and more forth
So that his lyfe he fare vn to the frothe
This al and some, a playnly our requeste
God helpe me so, I neuer other meste

Lo, this requeste is nought but skyl ywis
For beaute of reason parde is there none
I se the wel, that ye ben den this
Men wolde wonder to seng him come a gone
Ther ayenst answere I thus anone
That euery wight, but he be foole of hynde
Wol deme it loue of frendship in his mynde

What, who wol demen though he se a man
To temple gon, that he the images esteth
Thynke eke, howe wel a wyfely that he can
Eschewe hym self, so he nothing forfeteth
That wher he cometh, he pris and thonk hi geteth
And eke therto he shal come here so selde
What feyer were it, thouz al the towne beheld

Suche loue of frendes reyneth all this conn
And wyle you in that maner euermo
And god so wys be my saluacion
As I haue sayde, your best is so do so
But good nece, al way to slyen his wo
So let your daunger, fugerd ben slyte
That of his deth, ye be not alto wyte

Creseyde, whiche that herde hym in this wyse
Thouzt, I shal feign what ye meanen iwis

Nowe Eme (qd she) what wolde ye deuyse
What is your rede, I shulde done of thyse
That is wel sayd qd he, certayne best is
That ye him lone ayen for his louyng
Is loue for loue, is skylful guerdoning

Thynke eke howe elde waseth euery houre
In eche of you, a part of beaute
And therfore, er that age the deuoure
Go loue, for elde wyll no wight of the
Let this proverbe, a lore vnto you be
To late ywarre, qd beaute, whan it paste
And elde dauntern daunger, at the laste

The kynges foole is wont to crye loude
Whan that him thinketh a woman bereth her hye
So longe mote ye lyue, and al proude
Tyl crowes fete growe vnder your eye
And sende you than a myrrour in to prie
In which that ye may se your face a morowe
Nece, I vyd wythe you nomore sorowe

With this he stynte, and cast downe the eyen
And she began to sighe and wepe anone
And sayde, alas for wo, why nere I deed
For of this worlde, the fayrthe is al agone
Alas, what shulden straunge vnto me done
When he that for my best frende I wende
Bate me to loue, and shulde it me defende

Alas, I wolde haue trusted doutles
That if that I, through my disauenture
Had loued either him, or Achilles
Hector, or any other creature
Ye nolde haue had mercy nie mesure
On me, but alway had me in repreue
This false worlde alas, who may it leue

What is this al the ioy and al the fest
Is thys your trouthe is this my blisful cas
Is this the very mede of your beheste
Is al this payned proceste sayd (alas)
Right for this fyne, O lady myn Pallas
Thou in this dredful cas for me purueye
For so astonyed am I, that I dey

With that she gan ful sore wepen sty to syke
Ne may it be no bet (quod Pandarus)
By god I shal no more come here this wyke
And god to forme, that am mistrysted thus
I se wel now, ye setten light of vs
Or of our dethe alas, I woful wreche
Might he yet lyue, of me were nought to reche

O cruel

O cruel god, o dispitous Mayster
O furies thre of hel, on you I cry
So let me never out of thyn house departe
Er that I mene harme or vylanye
But syth I se my lorde more nedes dye
And I with him, here I me shryve and sey
That wickedly ye done vs bothe dey

But syth it lyketh you, that I be ded
By Neptunus that god is of the see
Fro this forthe shal I never eten bred
Tyl I myn owne herte blood may se
For certayne I wol dye as soone as he
And up he sterte, as on his way he raught
Tyl she agayne hym by the lappe caught

Creseyde, whiche that wel nigh starke for feare
So as she was the ferfullest wyght
That might be, and herde ever with her eare
And sawe the sorowful ernest of the knyght
And in his prayer sawe ever non but right
And for the harme ever that might fal more
Shr gan to rewe, and dredde her wonder sore

And thought thus, unhappes fallen thicke
Alday for loue, and in suche maner cases
As men ben cruel in hem selfe and wicke
And yf this man slee here hym selfe, alas
In my presence, it wyl be no solas
What men wolde of it deme, I can nat say
It nedeth me ful slyghly for to play

And with a sorowful sigh, she sayde thrie
Ah lorde, what me is tydde a sory chaunce
For myn estate lyeth in a ieopardye
And eke myn emes lyfe lyeth in balaunce
But natheles, with goddes gouernaunce
I shal so done, myne honour shal I kepe
And eke hys lyfe, and shyne for to wepe

Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese
Yet had I leuer maken hym good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyfe to lese
Ye sayne ye nothyng els me requere
Nay wys (quod he) myn owne nece dere
Nowe wel (quod she) as I wol don my payne
I shal myn herte ayen my lust constrayne

But yf I wyl nat holden hym in honde
Ne loue a man, that can I naught ne may
Fynde my wyl, but els wol I fonde
Myn honour saue, plesen him fro day to day
Therto nolde I not ones haue sayde nay
But that I bydde, as in my fantasye
But cese wande, aye er men may mislaye

But here I make a protestacion
That in this processe if ye depart ought
That ernestly, for no fascinacion
Of you, though that ye sterten bothe naught
Thoughe al the worlde on a day be my foo
Me shal I never on him haue other routhe
I graunt wel (quod Pandare) by my trouthe

But may I trust wel to you (quod he)
That of this thing that ye han bigon me here
Ye wol it holde trewly vnto me
Ye dowtelesse (quod she) myn vncle dere
Me thinketh I shal haue cause in this matere
(Quod he) to playne, or after you to preche
Why no parde, what nedeth more speche

Tho syl they in other tales glade
Tyl at the laste, o good eme (quod she tho)
For loue of god whiche that vs bothe made
Tel me how first ye wisten of hys wo
Wot non of it but ye, for sayde no
Can he wel speke of loue (quod she) I pray
Tel me, for I the bet shal me purvay

Tho Pandarus alyte gan to smyle
And sayde: by my trouthe I shal nowe tel
This ordre day, nat gon ful longe whyle
Within the paleys gardyn by a wel
Ganne he and I, wel halfe a day to duel
Right for to speken of an ydymnesse
How we the gerlers mighten disdayne

Soone after that we gone for to lepe
And walken with our barres to and fro
Tyl at the laste, he sayde, he wolde slepe
And on the gresse adowne, he layd him tho
And I after gan to romen, to and fro
Tyl that I herde, as I walked alone
Howe he began, ful wofully to grone

Tho gan I stalke him softly behynde
And sykerly the sothe for to sayne
As I can clepe ayen nowe to my mynde
Right thus to loue, he gan him for to playne
He sayde: Lorde, haue routh vpon my payne
Al haue I ben rebel in myne entente
Nowe (Mea culpa) lorde I me repente

O god, that at thy disposicion
Ledest the fine, by iuste purueyaunce

Of euery wight, my lorde confession
Iurpt in gree, and sende me suche penaunce
As lyketh the, but from me disesperaunce
That may my goost departe alway fro the
Thou be my shylde, for thy benignite

For certes lorde, so sore hath she me wounded
That stode I blacke, with lokyng of her eyen
That to myne herte botome it is yfounded
Through which I wot, þ I mote nedes dien
This is þ worst, I dare me nought bewrien
And wel the rather ben the gledes rede
That men hem wryen with ashen pale & dede

With that he smote hys herd adowne anone
And gan to mutter, I nat what trewely
And I with that gan stylle away to gone
And lete therof, as nothyng wyst had I
And come agayne anonand stode hym by
And sayde awake, ye slepen al to longe
It semeth nought þ loue doth you wronge

That slepen so, that no man may you wake
Who ferr ruer et this so dul a man
Ye frend (qõ he) do ye your herdes ake
For loue, and let me lyuen as I can
But lorde that he for wo was pale and wan
Yet made he tho as freshe a countenaunce
As though he shulde haue led the new daunce

This passed forth, tyl nowe this other daye
It fel that I come romyng al alone
Into hys chambre, & founde howe þ he laye
Upon his bedde: but man so sore grone
Ne herde I neuer, and what was his mone
Ne wyst I nought, for as I was commyng
Al sodaynly, he lefte his complaynyng

Of whiche I toke somwhat suspercion
And nere I come, and founde him wepe sore
And god so wyse be my saluacion
As neuer of thyng had I no routh more
For neyther with engyn, ne with no loore
Vnnethes myght I fro the deth him kepe
That yet frele I myne herte for him wepe

And god wot neuer sythe that I was borne
Was I so besy no man for to preche
Ne neuer was to wyght, so depe sworne
Er he me tolde, who might den his leche
But nowe to you therefen al hys speche
Or al hys wofful wordes for to sowne
Ne byd me nought, but ye wol se me swone

But for to saue hys lyfe, and eke nought
And to non harme of you, thus am I driuen
And for the loue of god þ vs hath wrought
Studie chere him dothe, þ he & I maye lyuen
Nowe haue I platte to you myn herte shriuen
And sythe ye wote that myne entent is clene
Take hede therof, for none yuel I mene

And right good thrift, I pray to god have ye
That han suche one ycaught withouten nette
And be ye wyse, as ye be fayre to se
Wel in the ryng, whan is the Ruby sette
There were neuer two so wel ymette
Whan ye ben his al hole, as he is your
There mighty god yet graũt vs se þ houre

Nay therof spake I nat: A ha (qõ she)
As helpe me god, ye shenden euery dele
I merry dere nece, anone (qõ he)
What so I spake, I ment nought but wele
By Mars the god, that helmed is of stele
Nowe beth not wroth, my blod, my nece dere
Nowe wel (qõ she) forgeuen be it here

With this he toke his leaue, & home he wente
Ye lorde howe he was glad, and well bygon
Creseyde arose, no lenger she ne stente
But streight in to her closet went anon
And set her downe, as styl as any stone
And euery worde gan vp & downe to wynde
That he had sayde, as it came her to mynde

And worse some dele astoned in her thought
Right for the newe case, but when that she
Was ful auised, tho fũde she right nought
Of peryl, why that she ought aferde be
For man may loue of possibylite
A woman so, his hert may to breste
And she nat loue ayen, but yf her leste

But as she satte alone, and thought thus
Thalarye arose at skarmoche al without
And men cryed in the strete, se Troylus
Hath right now put to flyght þ grekes rout
With that gonne al her meyne for to shoute
A, go we se, caste vp the gates wyde
For thrugh this strete he mote to paleys ryde

For other way is fro the yates none
Of Dardanus there open is the weyne
With that come he, & al hys folke anone
In easy pace ryding, in routes tweyne
Right his happy day was sothe to seyne

For

For whiche men sayth may not disturbed be
That shal werythe of necessyte

This Troylus satte on hys bay stede
Al armed saue his heed, ful ryche ly
And wounded was hys horse, & gan to bleede
On whiche he rode a pace ful softly
But such a knyghtly syght trewly
As was on hym, was nat withouten fayle
To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle

So lyke a man of armes, and a knyght
He was to sene, fulfylled of hygh prowesse
For bothe he had a body, and myght
To don that thyng, as wel as hardynesse
And eke to sene hym in hys geare dresse
So fresshe, so yonge, so weldy semed he
It was an heuen vpon hym for to se

Hys helme to hewen was in twenty places
That by a tyssue honge, hys backe behynde
His sheld to dasshed was with swerdes & with maces
In which men myght many an arowe fynde
That thrylled had horne, nerfe, and rynde
And ay the people cried, here cometh our ioy
And next his brother, holder vp of Troye

For whiche he wext a litel reed for shame
Whan he so herde the people vpon hym crien
That to beholde, it was noble game
Howe sobrelyche he caste a downe his eyen
Criseyde anone gan al hys chere espyen
And let it so soft in her herte synke
That to her selfe she said, who yaue me drinke

For al her owne thought, she wext al reed
Remembryng her right thus, lo this is he
Which y myne vncle sweareth he mote deed
But I on hym haue mercy and pyte
And with that thought for pure ashamed she
Gan in her heed to pul, and that as faste
Whyle he and al the people forth by paste

And gan to caste, & rollen vp and down
Within her thought hys excellent prowesse
And hys estate, and also hys renoun
His wytte, hys shape, and eke his gentylnesse
But most her fauour was, for hys distresse
Was al for her, & thought it were a routhe
To sleen such one, if that he ment trouthe

Nowe might some enuyous iangle thus
This was a sodayne loue, howe might it be
That she so lyghtly loued Troylus
Right for the first syght? ye parde
Nowe who so sayde so, more he neuer the
For euery thyng, a gynnyng hath it nede
Er al be wrought, withouten any drede

For I say nat that she so sodaynly
Yaf hym her loue, but that she gan enclyne
To lyken hym ryght wel, & I haue tolde you why
And after that, hys manhode and his pyne
Made that loue within her gan to myne
For whiche by proces, and by good seruyce
He wanne her loue, and in no sodayne wyse

And also blysful Venus wel arayed
Sate in her seuenth house of heuen tho
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed
To helpe fely Troylus of hys wo
And sothe to sayne, she nas nat al a foe
To Troylus, in hys nayuyte
God wot, that wel the sooner spedde he

Nowe let vs stynte of Troylus a stounde
That ryden forth, and let vs turne faste
Vnto Criseyde, that henge her heed ful lowe
There as she satte alone, and gan to caste
Wheron she wolde apoynt her at the laste
If it so were, her eme ne wolde cesse
For Troylus, vpon her for to presse

And lorde so she gan in her thought argue
In this mater, of which I haue you tolde
And what to don best were, and what eschue
That pyned she ful oft in many folde
Now was her hert warm, now was it colde
And what she thought, somwhat shal I write
As myn authour lyketh for to endyte

She thought first, that Troylus persone
She knewe by sight, & eke his gentrinesse
And thus she sayd, al were it nought to done
To graunt hym loue, yet for his worthynesse
It were honour with play, & with gladnesse
In honestie, with such a lorde to deale
For myne estate, and also for hys heale

Eke wel wot I, my kynges sonne is he
And syth he hath to seme such deyte
Yf I wolde vtterlyche his syght flye
Paraventure he might haue me in dispyte
Though which I might stonde in worse plyte
Nowe were I wyse, me hate to purchase
Without nede, there I may stonde in grace

In euery thing, I wote there lyth measure
For though a man forbyd dronkenesse
He nought forbydderth that euery creature
Be dronkelesse for alway as I gesse
Eke sythe I wot for me is his distresse
I ne ought not for that thing him dispise
Sythe it is so, he meaneth in good wyse

And eke I knowe, of longe tyme agone
His thewes good, and that he nys not nyce
No daunteur layne men, certayne he is none
To wyte is he, to done so great a vice
Ne als I nyl him neuer so cherice
That he shal make auaunt by iust cause
He shal me neuer bynde in suche a clause

Now set I case, the hardest is ywis
Men myght demen that he loueth me
What dishonour were it vnto me this
Wayt ich him let of that, why nay parde
I knowe also, and alway here and se
Men louen women al thys towne about
Be they the werse why nay wythout doute

I thynke eke howe, he worthy is to haue
Of al this noble towne the thriftyest
That women is, if she her honour saue
For out and out he is the worthyest
Haue onely Hector, whiche that is the best
And yet his lyfe lythe al nowe in my cure
But suche is loue, and eke myne auenture

Ne me to lone, a wonder is it nought
For wel wot I my selfe, so god me spede
I wol I that none wist of this thought
I am one the fayrest out of drede
And goodlyest, who so that taketh hede
And so men sayne in al the towne of Troye
What wonder is: though he of me haue ioye

I am myne owne woman wel at ese
I thanke it god, as after myne estate
Right yonge, I stonde vnteyed in lusty lese
Without ielousye, and suche debate
Shal no husbonde sayne to me checke mate
For either they ben ful of ielousye
Or maisterful, or louen nouelry

What shal I how to what fyne lyue I thus
Shal I not loue, in case if that me lyste
What parde wy I am not reygrous
And though that I myne hert set at reste
Vpon this knyght, that is the worthyeste
And kepe alway myne honour, and my name
By al right it may do me no shame

But right as whan the sunne shyneth bright
In Marche, that chaungeth oft tyme his face
And that a cloud ful put with winde to flight
Which ouerspraat the sunne, as for a space
A cloudy thought gan thrugh her soule pace
That ouerspradde her bright thoughtes al
So that for feare almost she gan to fall

That thought was this: Alas sythe I am free
Shuld I nowe loue, and put in ieopardye
My libertee, and thraldom lyberte
Alas, how durste I thynken that folye
May I not wel in other folke aspye
Her dredeful ioy, her constreynt, and her payne
Ther loueth non, that she ne hath way to playne

For loue is yet the most stormy lyfe
Right of him selfe, that euer was begonne
For euer some mistrust, or nyce stryfe
There is in loue, some cloude ouer the sonne
Ther to we wretched women nothyng conne
Whan vs is wo, but wepe and syt & thynke
Our wreche is this, our owne wo to drynke

Also wicked tonges ben so prest
To speke vs harme, eke men ben so vntrewe
That right anon as cessed is her lest
So cesseth loue, and fayne to loue a newe
But harme ydo is done, who so it rewe
For thogh these men for loue hem firste to grede
Ful sharpe begynnyng byeth oft at ende

Howe ofte tyme may men rede and sene
The treson, that to women hath be do
To what fyne is suche loue, I can not sene
Or where becometh it, whan it is go
There is no wight that wote, I trowe so
Wher it becometh, lo, no wight on it spareth
That erst was nothyng, in nought turneth

Howe best (if I loue) eke must I be
To plesen hem, that iangle of loue, & demen
And coyen hem, that they say no harme of me
For though there be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harme, that folke her fredes quemen
And who may stoppen euery wicked tonge
Or sowne of belles, while that they ben ronge

And after that her thought gan for to clere
And saide, he which that nothyng vndertaketh

Nothing whether, be him lothe or dere
And with another thought her herte quaketh
Than sleyeth hope, and after drede awaketh
Now hote now cold, but thus betwixt twey
She eyll her vp, and went her for to pley

Adowne the stayre, anon right tho she went
Into her gardyn, with her neces thre
And vp a downe, they maden many a went
Flexippe and she, Tarbe, and Antigone
To playen, that it ioye was to se
And other of her women a great route
Her folowed in the gardyn al about

This yerde was large, & rayled al the aleyes
And shadowed wel, with bloosmy bowes grene
And benched newe, and sonded all the wayes
In which she walketh arme in arme betwene
Tyl at the last Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troyan songe to syngen clere
That it an heuen was, her voyce to here

She sayde: O loue, to whom I haue, & shall
Ben humble subiect, trewe in myne entent
As I best can, to you I loude yeue I the al
For euer more myne hertes lust to rent
For neuer yet thy grace no wight sent
So blysful cause as me, any lyfe to lede
In al ioye and surete, out of drede

The blysful god, hath me so wel beset
In loue twys, that al that bereth lyfe
Ymagynen ne couthe how to be bet
For lorde withouten ielousye or stryfe
I loue one, whiche that most is enterlyfe
To semen wel, vnwemmyd or vnfayned
That euer was, & left with harme distayned

As he that is the wel of worthynesse
Of trouth grounde, myrrour of goodlyhed
Of wyt Apollo, flone of fyhernesse
Of hertes rote, of lustes fynder and hed
Thrugh which is al sorowe fro me ded
I wys I loue him best, so doth he me
Now good thryft haue he, wher so euer he be

Who shuld I thanke but you god of loue
Of al this blysse, in which to bathe I gynne
And thanked be ye lorde, for that I loue
This is the right lyfe that I am inne
To flemen al maner vyce and synne
This doth me so to vertue for to entende
That day by day I in my wyll amende

And who that saith that for to loue is vyce
Or thraldom, shongyne he fele in it bitternesse
He eyther is envyous, or right nyce
Or is vnmyghty for his shrewednesse
To louen, for suche maner folke I gesse
Disdainen loue, as nothyng of him knowe
They speken, but they benne neuer his bowe

What is the sonne worse of kynde right
Though it a man, for feblenesse of his eyen
May not endure on it to se for bryght
Or loue the worse, that wrecches ben it eyen
No wele is worth, that may no sorowe dryen
And for thy, who that hath an heed of verre
Fro cast of stones ware him in the werre

But I with al myne hert, and al my myght
As I haue sayd, wol loue vnto my last
My dere hert, and al myne owene knyght
In whiche myne herte growen is so fast
And his in me, that it shal euer last
Al dredde I first loue him to begyn
Now wot I wel there is no peryl in

And of her song right with that word she stent
And therwithal, now were (qd Creseyde)
Who made this songe, now in so good entent
Antygone answerde anon, and sayde
Madame twys the goodlyest mayde
Of great estate in al the towne of Troye
And lefd her lyfe in most honour and ioye

For soothe so semeth it by her songe
Quod tho Creseyde, & gan therwith to syke
And sayd: lorde, is there suche blysse amonge
These louers, as they can layne endite
Ye wysse quod fresshe Antigone the whyte
For al the folke that haue or ben on lyue
Ne con wel the blysse of loue discryue

But wene ye that euery wrecche wote
The parfyte blysse of loue, why nay ywis
They wenen al be loue, if one be hote
Do way do waye, they wote nothyng of this
Men more aldren of sayntes, if it is
Ought faire in heuen, & why: for they can tell
And aske fendes, if it be foule in hell

Creseyde vnto that purpose naught answerde
But sayd, twys it wol be nyght as faste
But euery word, which that she of her herde
She gan to printen in her hert faste
And aye gan loue her lasse for to agaste

Than

Than it dyd erst, and synken in her herte
That she waxe somwhat able to conuerte

The dayes honour, and the heuens eye
The nyghtes foe, al this clepe I the sonne
Gan westren fast, & dowenwarde fo2 to wy2e
Is he that had his dayes cou2se y2onne
And white thinges wo2xen dymme and donne
fo2 lacke of lyght, and sterres fo2 to ape2e
That she and al her folke in went yfere

So whan it lyked her to gon to reste
And voyded weren they that voyden ought
She sayd, that to slepen wel her leste
her women sone tyll her bed her b2ought
Whā al was huste, thā lay she stylle & thought
Of al this thing the maner and the wy2se
Reherce it nedeth not, fo2 ye ben wyse

A nyghtyngale vpon a Cedre grene
Vnder the chambre wall, there as she lay
ful loude songe ayen the moone shene
Paraventure in his byrdes wyse a lay
Of loue, that made her herte freshe & gay
That herkened she so longe in good entente
Tyl at the last the deed slepe her hent

And as she slept, anon right tho her mette
How that an Egle fethered whyte as bone
Vnder her brest his long clawes sette
And out her herte he rent, and that anon
And dyd his hert into her brest to gon
Of which she nought agro2se, ne nothig smerte
And fo2th he flyeth, with hert left fo2 herte

¶ Now let her slepe, & we our tales holde
Of Troylus, that is to paleys ry2dden
Fro the scarmyshe of whiche I tolde
And in his chambre sate, and hath abydden
Tyl two o2 thre of his messangers yeden
fo2 Pandarus, and soughten him ful fast
Tyl they him founde, & b2ought him at ỹ last

This Pandarus came leapyng in at ones
And sayd thus, who hath ben wel ybete
To day with swerdes, & stonge stones
But Troylus, that hath caughte him an hete
And gan to iape, & sayd, lo2de ye sweete
But ryse and let vs soupe, & go to reste
And he answerde him, do we as the leste

With al the hast goodly as they myght
They spedde hem fro the soupe2, and to bed
And euery wight out at the do2e him dight
And whider him lyst, vpon his way him sped
But Troylus thought that his hert bled
fo2 wo, tyl that he herde some tydyng
And sayd frende, shal I nowe wepe o2 syng

(Quod Pandarus) be styl & let me slepe
And do on thyne hoode, thy nedes spedde be
And chese if thou wolte synge, daunce, o2 lepe
Ie thozt wo2des thou shalte trowe me
Sir, my nece wol don wel by the
And loue the best, by god & by my trouthe
But lacke of pursute make it in thy slouthe

fo2 thus ferforth I haue thy werke begon
Fro day to day, tyl this day by the mo2owe
Her loue of frendshyp haue I fro the won
And therfo2e hath she laid her faith to bo2ow
Algate a foote is hameled of thy so2ow
What shuld I longer sermon of it holde
As ye haue herde befo2e, al he him tolde

But right as flo2es thro2z ỹ colde of nyght
Iclosed, stoupen in her stalkes lowe
Redressen hem ayen the sonne bright
And spreden in her kynde cou2se by rowe
Right so gan tho his eyen vp to thro we
This Troylus, and sayd: O Venus dere
Thy might, thy grace, yheryed be it here

And to Pandarus he held vp both his hōdes
And sayde, lo2de al thyn be that I haue
fo2 I am hole, and bro2sten ben my bondes
A thousande Troyes, who so that me yaue
Eche after other, god so wys me saue
Ne myght me so gladen, lo myne herte
It spredeth so fo2 soye it wol to sterte

But lo2de how shall I don, how shal I lyuen
Whan shal I nere my dere herte se
How shal this longe tyme away be driuen
Tyl that thou be ayen at her fro me
Thou mayst answere, abyde abyde: but he
That hangeth by the necke, sone to sayne
In great disease abydeth fo2 the payne

Measily now, fo2 the loue of Marte
(Quod Pandarus) fo2 euery thing hath tyme
So longe abyde, tyl that the nyght departe
fo2 also syker as thou lyest here by me
And god to fo2ne, I wol be there at prime
And fo2 thy werke somwhat, as I shal saye
O2 on sone other wight this charge laye

For parde god wot, I haue euer yet
Ben redy the to serue, and this nyght
Haue I not layned, but emforthe my wyt
Done al thy lust, and shal with al my myght
Do now as I shal sayne, and fare aright
And if thou wylte, wryte al thy selfe thy care
On me is nought alonge thyn yuel fare

I wote wel that thou wyser art than I
A thousande folde: but yf I were as thou
God helpe me so, as I wolde verely
Right of myne owne honde wryte her nowe
A letter, in which I wolde her tellen howe
I farde a mysse, and her beseche of routhe
Now helpe thy self, a leaue it for no slouthe

And I my selfe shal therwith to her gon
And whan thou woste ỳ I am with her there
Worthe thou vp on a courser right anon
Ye hardely, right in thy best gere
And ride forth by ỳ place, as naught ne were
And thou shalt fynde vs (if I may) stryving
At some wyndowe, in to the strete lokyng

And if the lyst, than mayst thou vs saine
And vpon me make thou thy countenaunce
But by thy lyfe bewarе, and fall eschue
To taryen ought, god shyld vs fro mischaūce
Ryde forthy thy way, a holde thy gouernaūce
And we shal speke of the somwhat I trowe
Whan thou art gon, to do thyn erres glowe

Touchyng thy lettre thou art wise ynoughe
I wot thou wylte it deignely che endyte
As make it with these argumentes roughe
Ne seruey myghe or crafterly thou it wryte
Beblotte it with thy teeres eke alyte
And if thou wryte a goodly worde al softe
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte

For though the best harpour vpon lyue
Wold on the best sowned ioly harpe
That euer was, with al his fyngers fyue
Touche aye o stryngе, or aye o warble harpe
Were his nayles poynted neuer so sharpe
It shulde make euery wight to dull
To here his glee, a of his strokes full

Ne iombre eke no discordaunt thing yfere
As thus, to vse termes of physyke
In ioues termes holde of thy matere
The forme alway, and do that it be lyke
For if a peyntour wolde paynte a pyke
With asses fete, and hedes as an aye
Ful corderly, it were to muche a raye

This counsayle lyked wel vnto Troylus
But as a dredeful louer, he sayd this
Alas my dere brother Pandarus
I am ashamed for to wryte ywis
Lest of myn innocence I sayd amys
Or that she wolde it for dispyte receyue
Than were I dede, ther myght it nothyng weme

To that Pandare answerde, if the lest
Do that I say, and let me therwith gon
For by that lorde that formed erst and west
I hope of it to bring answere anon
Right of her honde, a if that thou wylte non
Let be, and sory mote he ben his lyue
Ayenst thy lust, that helpeth the to thryue

(Od Troylus) depardieux yche assent
Syth that the lyst, I wol ar ryse and wryte
And blyssful god pray yche with good entent
The vyage and the lettre I shall endyte
So spede it, and thou Cynthya the whyte
Yeue thou me wyt, my lettre to devyse
And set him downe, a wrot right in this wise

First he gan her his right lady call
His hertes lyfe, his lust, his sorowes leche
His blysse, and eke these other termes all
That in suche case ye louers al seche
And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche
He gan him recommaunde vnto her grace
To tell al howe, it asketh moche space

And after this ful lowly he her prayde
To be nought wrothe, though he of his folye
So hardy was to her to wryte, and sayde
That loue it made, or els muste he dye
And pitously gan mercy for to crye
And after that he sayd, and syked ful loude
Him selfe was lytel worthe, a lasse he coude

And that she wold hane his cōnyng excused
That lytel was, and eke he dradde her to
And his vnworthynesse aye he accused
And after that than gan he tel his wo
But that was endeles withouten ho
And said, he wold in trouth alway him holde
And redde it ouer, and gan the lettre folde

And with his salte teeres gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette

Upon

upon the wepe delyuerlyche and rathe
Therwith a thousande rymes, er he lette
ye lyst the the lettre that he shette
And sayde, lettre a blysful destine
The shapen is, my lady shal the se

Thys Pandare toke the lettre, & that betyme
Amorowe, and to his neces paleys sterte
And fast he swore, that it was passed prime
And gan to lape, and sayd: ywis myne herte
So fresshe it is, although it sore smerte
I may nat slepe neuer a Mayes morowe
I haue a ioly wo, a lusty sorowe

Creseyde, whan that she her uncle herde
With dredeful herte, and desyrous to here
The cause of his commynge, thus answerde
Now by your faith myn uncle (qõ she) dere
What maner wyndes gydeth you nowe here
Tell us your sorye wo, and your penaunce
How ferforth be ye put in loues daunce

By god (qõ he) I hope alway behynde
And to laugh, it thought her herte brest
(Qõ Pãdarus) loke alway that ye fynde
Game in myn hood, but herkeneth if you lest
Ther is right now come into ỹ towne a gest
A grete clyye, and telleth new thynges
For whiche I come to tel you newe tidynges

In to the gardyn go we, and ye shall here
Al priuely of this a longe sermoun
With that they wenten arme in arme yfere
In to the gardyn fro the chambre doun
And whan he was so farre, that the soun
Of that he spake, no man heren myght
He sayd her thus, and out the letter plyght

Lo, he that is al holly yours free
Him recommaundeth lowly to your grace
And sent you this letter here by me
Auyseth you on it, whan ye han space
And of some goodly answere you purchase
Or helpe me god so, playnely for to sayne
He may not longe lyuen for his payne

Ful dredefully tho gan she stonde styl
And took it not, but al her humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and sayd scripe not byl
For loue of god, that toucheth such matere
Ne bring me none, and also uncle dere
To myne estate haue more regarde I pray
Than to his lust, what shulde I more say

And loketh nowe if this be resonable
And letteth not for fauour ne for slouthe
To sayne a sothe, now is it conenable
To myne estate, by god and by my trouthe,
To take it, or to haue of him routhe
In harmyng of my selfe, or in repreue
Beare it ayen, for him that ye on leue

This Pandarus gan her for to stare
And sayd, now is this the greatest wonder
That euer I sawe, let be this nyce fare
To deth mote I smyten be with thonder
Yf for the cytie, whiche that stondeth yonder
Wold I a letter unto you bryng or take
To harme of you: what lyst you thus it make

But thus ye faren well nyghe all and some
That he that most desyreth you to serue
Of him ye recche lest, where he become
And whether that he lyue, or els sterue
But for al that, that euer I may deserue
Refuse it not (qõ he) and hente her fast
And in her bosome the letter downe he thrast

And sayd her, now cast it away anon
That folke may sene, & gauren on us twey
(Quod she) I can abyde tyl they be gon
And gan to smyle, & sayd him, eme I pray
Suche answere as you lyst your selfe purvey
For trewly I wol no letter wryte
No, than wol I (qõ he) so ye endyte

Therwith she lough, and sayd go we dyne
And he gan at him selfe iape faste
And sayd nece, I haue so great a pyne
For loue, that euery the other day I faste
And gan his best iapes forth to caste
And made her so to laugh at his folye
That she for laughter wende for to dye

And whan ỹ she was comen into the hall
Now eme (qõ she) we wol go dyne anon
And gan some of her women to her call
And streyght in to her chambre gan she gone
But of her besynesses this was one
Amonges other thynges, out of drede
Ful priuely this letter for to rede

Auysed word by word in euery lyne
And fonde no lacke, she thought he coude his (goode
And vp it put & went her in to dyne
And Pandarus, that in a studye stoode
Er he was ware, she toke him by the hoode.

And sayd, ye here taught er that ye wyste
I bought sale (qꝺ he) do what you lyste

Tho wythen they, and set hem downe ꝑ ete
And after noone ful sygnly Pandarus
Gan draw him to ꝑ wyndowe nye the strete
And said nece, who hath arayed thys
The ponder house, that stante afore ye vs
Which house (qꝺ she) and gan for to beholde
And knewe it wel, ꝑ whose it was him tolde

And fellen forth in spechs of thynges smale
And eaten in the wyndowe both twey
Whan Pandarus sawe tyme vnto his tale
And sawe wel that her folke were al awey
Now nece myn tel on (quod he) I prey
How lyketh you the lettre that ye wot
Can he theron, for by my trouth I not

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wore she
And gan to hum, and said, so I trowe
Iquyte him wel for goddes loue (qꝺ he)
Wy selfe to medes wol the lettre lowe
And held his hondes vp, and sat on knowe
Nowe good nece, be it neuer so lyte
Yeue me the labour, it to lowe and plyte

Ye, for I can so write (qꝺ she) tho
And eke I not what I shuld to him say
Nay nece (qꝺ Pandare) say not so
Yet at the leste, thonketh him I pray
Of his good wyll: O, doth him not to dey
Now for the loue of me my nece dere
Refuseth not at this tyme my prayere

Verdieux (qꝺ she) god leue al be wele
God helpe me so, this is the first lettre
That euer I wrote, ye al or any dele
And vnto ꝑ closet for to auyse her bettre
She went alone, ꝑ gan her herte vnfettre
Out of disdaynes prison, but a lyte
And set her down, and gan a lettre write

Of whiche to tel in shorte is myn entent
The effecte, as ferre as I can vnderstonde
She thonked him, of al that he wel ment
Towardes her, but holden him in honde
She nolde not me make her selues bonde
In loue, but as his suster him to plese
She wolde aye fayne, to done his herte ese

She herte it, and to Pandare in to gon
There as he sat, and loked in to strete
And downe she set her by him on a fame
Of ivyre, vpon a quysshen of golde there
And sayd, as wisely helpe me god the grete
I neuer dyd a thyng with more payne
Than write this, to which ye me constrayne

And take it him: she thonked her, and sayde
God wot of thyng ful often late begonne
Cometh ende good: and nece myne Creseyde
That ye to him of harde nowe ben ywonne
Ought he be glad, by god a ponder sonne
For why, men sayethe impressions lyght
Ful lyghtly ben aye redy to the lyght

But ye han played the tyraunt al to longe
And harde was it your herte for to grave
Now stynte, that ye no lenger on it longe
Al wolden ye the forme of daunger save
But haseth you to done him ioye haue
For trusteth wel, to longe ydone harde ete
Causeth disspyte ful often for distrete

And right as they declared this matere
Lo Troylus, right at the stretes ende
Came rydyng with his trouthe some yere
Al softely, and thyderwarde gan bende
There as thy sate, as was his way to wende
To paleys warde, and Pandare him aspyde
And sayd, nece yere who cometh here ryde

O, stye not in, he sethe vs I suppose
Lest he may thynken that ye him eschue
Nay nay (qꝺ she) ꝑ wore as redde as rose
With that he gan her humbly salue
With dredful chere, and ofte his hewes mue
And vp his loke debonairely he caste
And bekked on Pandare, ꝑ forthe he paste

God wot if he sat on his hexte aright
Or goodly was besene that ilke day
God wot wher he were lyke a manly knyght
What shuld I discrive, or tel of his aray
Creseyde, which that al these thynges sey
To tell in shorte, her lyked al yfere
His person, his aray, his loke, hys chere

His goodly maner, and his gentylesse
So wel, that neuer sythe that she was borne
Ne had she suche routhe of his distresse
And howe so, she hath hard ben here beforne
To god hope I, she hath now caught a thorne
She shal nat pul it out this next wyke
God sende mo suche thornes on to pyke

Pandare

Pandare, whiche that stode her faste by
Felte vpon hors, and he began to smyte
And sayde, nece I pray you hertely
Tel me that I shal asken you a lyte
A woman ꝑ were of his herte to wyte
Without his gilt, but for her lacke of routh
Were it wel done (qꝺ he) nay be my trouth

God helpe me so (qꝺ he) ye say me sothe
Ye witen wel your selfe that I nought lye
Lo, rounde he rydeth (qꝺ she) ye so he dothe
Wel qꝺ Pandare, as I haue tolde you thrye
Let be your nyce shame, and your folye
And spede with him, in ealyng of his herte
Let nycete nat do you bothe smerte

But therto was to heauen and to done
Considerynge al thyng, it may nat be
And why for shame, it were eke to sone
To graunten him so great a lyberte
For playnly her entent, as (sayde she)
Was for to loue him vntrist, if she myght
And guerdon him with nothyng but with sight

But Pandare thought, it shal nat be so
If that I may, thys nyce opynyon
Shal nat ben holden fully yeres two
What thuld I make of this a longe sermon
He muste assent on that conclusyon
As for the tyme, and whan that it was eue
And al was wel, he rose and toke his leue

And on his way fast homewarde he spedde
And right for ioy he felte his herte daunce
And Troylus he founde alone abedde
That lay, as doue these louers in a traunce
Betwixen hope and derke disesperaunce
But Pandare, right at his in comminge
He song, as who sayth, lo, somwhat I bring

And sayde, who is in his bedde so sone
Vburyed thus, it am I frende (qꝺ he)
Who Troylus, nay, helpe me to the moone
(Qꝺ Pandarus) thou shalt vp vyse and se
A charme that was sent right nowe to the
The whiche can healen the of thyne axelle
If thou do forth with al thy besynesse

Ye through the might of god (qꝺ Troylus)
And Pandarus gan him the letter take
And sayde, parde god hath holpen vs
Haue here a lyght, and loke on al these blake
But oft gan the hert glad and quake
Of Troylus, while he it gan to rede
So as the wordes yane hym hope or drede

But fynally he toke al for the beste
That she him wrote, for somwhat he beheld
On which he thought he might his hert reste
Al couered she the wordes vnder shelde
Thus to the more worthy part he held
That what for hope, and Pandarus behelde
His great wo forthe he at the leste

But as we may al day our selues se
Through wood or cole the more fyre
Right so encrease of hoope, of what it be
Therwith ful ofte encreaseth eke desyre
Or as an oke cometh of a lytel spyre
So through this letter, which ꝑ she him sent
Encreasen gan desyre of whiche he brent

Wherfore I say alway, that day and nyght
This Troylus gan to desyren more
The he did erst through hope, and did his myght
To preuen on, as by Pandarus lore
And writen to her of hys sorowes sore
Fro day to day, he let it nought refreyde
That by Pãdare he somwhat wrot or seyde

And dyd also his other obseruaunces
That eyl a louer longeth in thys caas
And after that hys dyer turned on chaunces
So was he either glad, or sayde alas
And held after hys gestes aye hys paas
And after suche answers, as he hadde
So were his dayes sorry either gladde

But to Pandare alway was his recours
And prively gan aye on hym to playne
And hym besought of rede, and some socours
And Pandarus, that sawe his wode payne
Nere wel nigh dead for routh for to sayne
And beseely with al his herte caste
Some of his wo to sleen, and that as faste

And sayd, Lorde and frende, and brother dere
God wot that thy disease dothe me woo
But wolt thou stynten al this wofal chere
And by my trouth, er it be dayes two
And god to forme, yet shal I shape it so
That thou shalt come in to a certayne place
Ther as ꝑ mayst thy selfe prayen her of grace

And certaynly I not if thou it wiste
But they that ben experte in loue, it say

It is one of these thynges forthereth moo
A man to haue a leyser for to pray
And syker place, his wo for to bewray
For in good herte it mote some routh wyrkke
To here and se the grisliche in distresse

Paraventure thynkest thou, though it be so
That kynde wolde her done for to begynne
To haue a maner routh vpon my wo
Sayth dauger nay, thou shalt me neuer win
So ruleth her herres goste within
That though she bende, yet she stont on rote
What in effect is this vnto my bote

Thynke here ayen, whan that the sturdy oke
On whiche men hacketh ofte for the noues
Recyued hath the happy failyng stroke
The great swerght doth it come al at ones
As done these rockes, or these myne stones
For swifter course cometh thig ỹ is of wight
When it discendeth, than done thynges light

But rede that boweth down for euery blaste
Ful lyghtly cesse wynde, it wol aryse
But so nyl not an ook, whan it is caste
It nedeth me nought longe the forbyde
Men shal reioysen of a great empryse
Atchened wel, and stane withouten dout
Al haue men ben the lenger there about

But Troylus, nowe tel me if the lest
A thynge, whiche that I shal aske the
Whiche is thy brother, that thou louest best
Is in thy very herres priuyte
Iwis my brother Deiphebus tho (qõ he)
Now (qõ Pandare) er houres twyse twelue
He shal the ease, vnwist of it hym selue

Nowe let me alone, and worken as I may
(Qõ he) and to Deiphebus went he tho
Whiche had his lorde, a great frende ben aye
Sane Troylus no man he loued so
To tel in shorte without wordes mo
(Quod Pandarus) I pray you that ye be
Frende to a cause, whiche that toucheth me

Yes parde (qõ Deiphebus) wel thou wotest
Al that euer I may, and god to fore
Al were it but for the man I loue moste
My brother Troylus, but say wherfore
It is, for sythe the day that I was bore
I nas, ne neuer mo to ben I thynke
Ygrett a thyng that myght the forthynke

Pandare gan hym shanke, and to hym seyde
Lo sir, I haue a lady in this towne
That is my nece, and called is Creseyde
Whiche some men wolde done oppressyoun
And wrongfully haue her possessyoun
Wherfore I of your lordshyp you beseche
To ben one frende, withouten more speche

Deiphebus hym answerde: O, is nat this
That thou spekest of to me thus straungely
Creseyde my frende? ye sayde hym yes
Than nedeth (qõ Deiphebus) hardely
No more of this to speke, for trusteth wel ỹ I
Wol be her champyon with spore and yerde
I ne rought nat, though all her foes it herde

But tel me howe, for thou wost this matere
I myght best auayten, nowe lette se
(Qõ Pandarus) if ye my lorde so dere
Wolden as nowe do this honour to me
To prayen her to mozowe, lo that she
Came vnto you, her playntes to deuyse
Her aduersaries wolde of it agryse

And if I more durst praye as nowe
And chargen you to haue so great trauayle
To haue some of your brethre here with you
That mighten to her cause her auayle
Than wote I wel she myght neuer fayle
For to ben holpen, what at your instaunce
What with her other frendes gouernaunce

Deiphebus, which that comen was of kynde
To al honour and bounte to conforte
Answerde, it shal be done: And I can fynde
Yet greater helpe to this myne entente
What woldest ỹ sayne, if for Heleyne I stent
To speke of this, I trowe it be the beste
For she may leden Paris as her leste

Of Hector, which ỹ is my lorde my brother
It nedeth nat to prayen hym frende to be
For I haue herde hym, a ryme and eke other
Speken of Creseyde suche honour, that he
May sayne no bet, such hap to hym hath she
It nedeth nat his helpes more crane
He shal be suche, right as we wol him haue

Speke thou thy selfe also to Troylus
On my behalfe, and pray him with vs dyne
Sir, al this shalbe done (qõ Pandarus)
And toke his leaue, and neuer gan to fyne
But to hys neces house as streight as lyne

He

he came, and founde her fro the meate aryse
And set him down, & spake right in this wise

He sayde, O dere god, so haue I ronne
Lo nece myn, se ye nat howe I swete
I not where ye the more thanke me conne
Se ye not ware howe false Poliphete
Is nowe about ekt sones for to plete
And bringe on you aduocacyes newe?
I, no (qd she) and chaunged al her hewe

What is he more about me to dreche
And done me wronge, what shal I don, alas
Yet of hym selfe nothyng wolde I reche
Sent it for Antenor and Eneas
That ben his frendes in suche maner caas
But for the loue of god, myn vncle dere
So force of that, let hym haue al yfere

Withouten that, I haue ynough for vs
Nay qd Pandare it shal nothyng be so
For I haue ben ryght nowe at Deiphebus
I herde, and myn other lordes mo
And shortly maked eche of hem hys so
That by my thrifte, he shal it neuer winne
For aught he can, whan so that he begynne

And as they caston what was best to done
Deiphebus, of hys owne curtesye
Came her to pray, in his proper persone
To holde hym on the morowe compayne
It diner, whiche she nolde not denye
But goodly gan to hys prayer obey
He thonked her, and went vpon hys wey

Whan this was don, thys Pandare anone
Took in thorte, & forth he gan to wende
To Troylus, as styl as any stone
And al this thing he tolde hym worde & ende
And howe that he Deiphebus gan to blende
And sayde hym, now is tyme of ye conne
To bere the wel to morowe we, & al is wonne

Now speke, now pray, now pytously cõplain
Let nat for ryce shame, drede, or slouthe
Somtyme a man mote tel his owne payne
Beleue it, and she wol haue on the routhe
Thou shalt ben saued by thy fayth in trouth
But wel wot I, thou nowe art in a drede
And what it is, I say that I can arede

Thou thinkest now, how shulde I dõ al this
For by my cheres mosten folke espye
That for her loue is, that I fare amis
Yet had I leuer vnwist for sorowe dye
Nowe thynke nat so, for thou dost gret folye
For I right nowe haue founden a maniere
Of sleight, for to kouere al thy chere

Thou shalt gon ouernyght, & that blyue
Vnto Deiphebus house, as the to play
Thy malady away the list to dryue
For whiche thou semest sicke soth to say
Sone after that, in thy bedde the lay
And say thou mayst no lenger endure
And lye right there, and byde thyn auenture

Say that thy feuer is wonte the for to take
The same tyme, and lasse tyl a morowe
And let se nowe howe wel thou canst it make
For parde sicke is he that is in sorowe
So now farwel, and Venus here to borowe
I hope and thou this purpose holde ferme
Thy grace she shal fully there conforme

(Qd Troylus) ywis thou nedelesse
Counsaylest me, that sickelyche I me fayne
For I am sicke in ernest doutelesse
So that wel nigh I sterue for the payne
(Qd Pandarus) thou shalt ꝑ better playne
And haste the lesse nede to counterfete
For him demeth men hote, ꝑ seeth him swete

Lo, holde the at thy tryste close, and I
Shal wel the dere vnto the bowe dryue
Therwith he toke hys leaue al softly
And Troylus to paleys went blyue
So glad ne was he neuer in al hys lyue
And to Pandarus rede gan al assent
And to Deiphebus house at night he went

What nedeth it you to tellen al the chere
That Deiphebus vnto hys brother made
Or his arys, or hys sickelyche manere
Howe men gon hym with clothes for to lade
Whẽ he was layd, & hõw mẽ wold him glad
But al for nought, he helde forth aye the wyse
That ye han herde Pandare er this deuyse

But certayne is, er Troylus hym leyde
Deiphebus had prayed him ouernyght
To ben a frende, and helping to Creseyde
God wot that he graunted anon ryght
To ben her ful frend with al his myght
But such a nede was it to praien him thenne
As for to bydde a woode man to renne

The morowe came, and gan the tyme
Of mealtyde, that the fayre queue Heleyne
Shope her to ben anhoure after the prime
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde fayne
But as hys suster, homely sothe to sayne
She came to dyner, in her playne entent
But godes pandare wyst al what this ment

Came eke Cresseyde al innocent of this
Antygone her neee, and Tarbe also
But tyte we nowe prolixite best is
For loue of god, and let vs faste go
Right to the sterte, withouten tales mo
Why al this folke assembled in thys place
And let vs of her salutynges pace

Great honour dyd hem Deiphebus certayne
And fedde hem wel, with al that might lyke
But cuerino alas, was his refrayne
My good brother Troylus the syke
Lythe yet, and therwithal he gan to syke
And after that he payned hym to glade
Hem as he myght, and chere good he made

Complayned eke Heleyne of hys sickenesse
So faythfully that it pety was to here
And euery wight gan wexen for axes
A leche anon, and sayde in this manere
Ben curen folke, this charme I wol the lere
But there sate one, al lyste her nat to teche
That thought, yet best could I ben his leche

After complaynt hym gonnen they to prayse
As folke don yet whā some wyst hath begon
To prayse a man, and with praise hym rayse
A thousande folde yet hyghet than he son
He is, he can, that fewe lordes kon
And pandarus of that they wolde afferme
He nought forgate her praysing to conferme

Herde al this thing Cresseyde wel ynough
And euery worde gan for to notifye
For whiche with sobre chere her herte lough
For who is that ne wolde her gloryfye
To mowen suche a knyght done lyue or dye
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwel
But for o fyne is al that euer I tel

The tyme came fro dyner for to ryse
And as hem ought, aryseu euerychone
And gone a whyle of this and that deuyse
But pandarus brake al this speche anon
And sayd to Deiphebus, wol ye gon
If your wyl be, as I you prayde
To speken of the nedes of Cresseyde

Heleyne, which that by the honde her held
Toke first the tale and sayde, go we blyue
And goodly on Cresseyde she beheld
And sayd, Ioues let hym neuer thryue
That doth you harm, and reue him sone of lyue
And yeue me sorowe, but he shal it true
If that I may, and al folke be true

Tel thou thy nyces cast (qd Deiphebus)
To pandarus, for thou canste best it tel
My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus
What shulde I lenger (qd he) do you dwel
He ronge hem out a proces lyke a bel
Upon her soe, that highte Polyphete
So heynous, that men might on it spete

Answerde of this eche worse of hē thā other
And Polyphete they gonnen thus to warien
In honged be sucht one, were he my brother
And so be shal, for it ne may nought tarien
What shulde I lenger in this tale tarien
Playnelyche al at ones they her highten
To ben her frēde, in al that euer they mighten

Spake than Heleyne, and sayd pandarus
I counsayl my lord my brother of this matte
I meane [illegible]tor, or wote it Troylus
He sayd yt, but wol ye me nowe here
Me thinketh thus, sith that Troylus is here
It were good, if that ye wolde assent
She tolde him her selfe al this er she went

For he wol haue the more her grefe at herte
Bycause so, that she a lady is
And by your wyl, I wol but in right sterte
And do you wete, and that anon ywis
If that he slepe, or wol aught here of this
And in he lept, and sayde hym in his eere
God haue thy soule, bysouȝt haue I thy here

To smylen of this gan tho Troylus
And pandarus without tarieyng
Out went anon to Heleyne and Deiphebus
And sayd hem, so there be no taryeng
Ne more preasse, he wol wel that ye bringe
Cresseyde my lady, that is here
And as he may enduren, he wol her here

But wel ye wote, the chambre is but lyte
And fewe folke may lightly make it warme

Nowe

Nowe loketh ye, for I wol haue no wyte
To dwinge in preate, I might ben blamed herne
Of hym diffrafen, for my better arme
Yet were it ben the hyde eyl ofte tooniſt
Nowe loke ye that knowen what to don is

I ſay for me beſt is, as I can knowe
That no wight in ne wende, but ye ruſey
Sor it were I, for I can in a throwe
Reherſe her caſe, vnlyke that ſhe can ſey
And after this ſhe may ones hym prey
To ben good lorde, & take her leue
This may not make of hys eſt hym greue

And eke for ſhe is ſtraunge, he wol forbere
His caſe, whiche that hym dare nat for you
The other thyng that toucheth nat to ben
He wol it rel, I wote it wel right nowe
That ſecrete is, and for the rowmes prowe
And they that knewe nothyng of his entente
Without more, to Troylus in they wente

Helayne in al her goodly ſofte wyſe
Gan hym ſalue, and womanly to play
And ſayd ywis, ye more algate aryſe
Nowe fayre brother be al hole I pray
And gan her arme right ouer his ſholder lay
And hym with al her wit to recomforte
As ſhe beſte couloe, ſhe gan hym to diſporte

So after this (quod ſhe) we you beſeche
My dere brother Helphebus and I
For loue of god, and ſo bothe Pandare eke
To ben good lorde & frende right hertely
Vnto Creſeyde, whiche that certaynly
Reſteyneth wrong, as wot wel here Pandare
That can her caſe wel bet than I declare

This Pandarus gan newe his tonge affyle
And al her caſe reherſe, and that anon
Whan it was ſayd, ſone after in a whyle
(Quod Troylus) as ſone as I may gone
I wol right fayne, with al my might ben one
Haue god my trouth, her cauſe to ſuſtene
Nowe good thrift haue ye (quod Helein ꝑ queene)

(Quod Pandarus) and it your wyl be
That ſhe may take her leaue, er that ſhe go
O, nis god forbyd it (tho quod he)
If that ſhe vouchſafe for to do ſo
And with that worde (quod Troylus) ye two
Helphebus, and my ſuſter lefe and dere
To you haue I to ſpeke of a matere

To ben auyſed by your rede the better
And ſoude (as hap was) at his beddes hed
The copye of a treteyſe, and a letter
That Hector had hym ſent, to aſken red
If ſuche a man was worthy to ben ded
Wete I naught who, but in a greſly wiſe
He prayde hem anone on it auyſe

Helphebus gan this letter for to vnfolde
In terneſt great, ſo dyd Helayne the queene
And coming outwarde, faſt it gonne beholde
Downwarde a ſteyre, into an herber greene
This like thing redden hem bet weene
And largely the mountenaunce of an houre
They gonne on it to reden and to poure

Nowe let hem rede, and turne we anone
To Pandarus, that gan ful ſofte pryc
That al was wel, and out he gan to gon
Into the great chambre, and that in hye
And ſayd, god ſaue al this companye
Come neer myn, my lady queene Helayne
Abydeth you, and eke my lordes tweyne

Ryſe, take with you your nece Antygone
Or whom you lyſte, or no force hardely
The laſſe preaſe the bet, come forth with me
And loke that ye thonken humbly
Hem al thre, and when ye may goodly
Your tyme ſe, taketh of hem your leue
Leſte we to longe hys reſtes hym byreue

Al innocent of Pandarus entente
(Quod tho Creſeyde) go we vncle dere
And arme in arme, inwarde vb him ſhe wente
Auyſing wel her wordes and her chere
And Pandarus, in erneſtful manere
Sayd, al folke for goddes loue I pray
Stynteth right here, and ſoftely you play

Auyſeth you what folke ben here within
And in what plyte one is, god him amende
And inwarde thus ful ſoftely begyn
Neece I conjure, and highly you defende
On his halfe, which that ſoule vs al ſende
And in the vertue of cozownes twayne
Sle na this man, ꝑ hath for you this payne

Fye on the dyuel, thynke which one he is
And in what plyte he lythe, come of anone
Thynke al ſuche carped tyde but loſt it nys
That wol ye bothe ſayne, whom ye ben one
Secondly, there yet deupneth none

Vpon

Upon you rhoe, come of wowe if ye comme
While folke is blene, lo, al the game is wonne

Iwitterynge and pastute, and delayes
The folke benyme, at weggyng of a steere
And though ye wolde han after mery dayes
Than dare ye nat, and why? for he and she
Spake suche a wordes, thus loked he and he
Lest tyme be loste, I pace nat with you dele
Come of therfore, and bringeth him to hele

But nowe to you, ye louers that ben here
Was Troylus nat in a rankedore
That lay, & might the whispringe of hē here
And thought o lord, rist now rēneth my sore
Fully to dye, or haue anone comfore
And was the first tyme he shulde her pray
Of loue, O mighty god, what shal he say.

Explicit liber secundus.

Blisful lyght, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thyrde heuen fayre
O sonnes lefe, O Iones doughter dere
Plesaunce of loue, O goodly debonayre
In gentle hertes aye redy to repayre
O very cause of heale and of gladnesse
Yherged be thy might and thy goodnesse

In heuen and hel, in erth, and salte se
Is felte thy might, if that I wel discerne
As man, beest, fythe, herbe, and grene tre
They fele in tymes with vapour eterne
God loueth, & to loue wol naught werne
And in this worlde no lyues creature
Withouten loue is worth, or may endure

Ye Iones first, to thylke affectes glade
Through whiche þ thynges lyuen all, and be
Comended, and amorous hem made
On mortal thyng, and as you lyst aye ye
Yeue hem in loue, ease, or aduersyte
And in a thousande formes downe hem sente
For loue in erth, & whom you lyst he hente

Ye fiers Mars apeasen of hys ire
And as you lyst, ye maken hertes digne
Algates hem that ye wol set a fyre
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne
Ye hem hem curteys be, fresh, and benygne
And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth
The loyes that he hath, your might it sendeth

Ye holden regne and house in bnite
Ye forthfull cause of frendshyp ben also
Ye knowen al thylke couered qualyte
Of thynges, whiche that folke wondren so
Whan they can nat construe how it may go
She loueth hym, or why he loueth here
As why this fish, is nat that cometh to were

Ye folke a lawe haue set in vniuerse
And this knowe I by hem that louers be
That who so striueth wt you hath the werse
Nowe lady bright, for thy benignyte
At reuerence of hem that seruen the
Whose clerke I am, so techeth me deuyse
Some ioye of that is felte in thy seruyce

Ye, in my naked herte sentements
Inspire, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse
Caliope, thy voyce be nowe present
For nowe is nede, seest thou nat my distresse
Howe I mote tel anonright the gladnesse
Of Troylus, to Venus heryinge
To whiche who nede hath, god him bring.

Incipit liber tercius.

Ay al this meane whyle Troylus
Recordyng his lesson in this manere
Wakey thought he, thus wol I say and thus
Thus wol I playne vnto my lady dere
That wordes is good, & this shal be my chere
This nyl I nat forgeten in no wyse
God leue hym werken as he can deuyse

And lorde so that his herte gan to quappe
Heryng her come, and thorte for to sykē
And Pandarus that ledde her by the lappe
Came nere, and gan in at the curteyn pryke
And sayd, god do bote on al sykē
She who is here, you comen to bysyte
Lo, here is she that is your bothe to wyte

Therwith it semed as he wept almoste
A, a, (qd Troylus) to courtesly
Where me by wo, O mighty god thou woste
Who is al there, I se nat trewely

But

Sir(quod Creseyde) it is Pandare and I
Ye swete herte alas, I may nat rise
To knele, and do you honour in some wyse

And dressed him vpwarde, and she right tho
Gan bothe her hondes softe vpon him ley
O for the loue of god, do ye not so
To me(quod she) ey what is this to sey
Sir, comen am I to you for causes twey
First you to thonke, and of your lordshyp eke
Contynuaunce I wolde you beseke

This Troylus that herde his lady pray
Of lordshyp, him wore nether quicke ne deed
Ne myght a worde for shame to it say
Although men shulden smyten of his heed
But lorde so he woxe sodaynlyche reed
And sir, his lesson that he wende conne
To prayen her, is through his wyt ronne

Creseyde al this aspyde wel ynough
For she was wise, & loued him neuer the lasse
Al nere he in al aperte, or made it tough
Or was to bolde, to synge a foole a masse
But whan his shame gan somwhat to passe
His resons, as I may my rymes holde
I wol you tell, as techen bokes olde

In chaūged voyce, right for his bery drede
Which voyce eke quoke, & therto his manere
Goodly abasht, and now his hewes rede
Now pale, vnto Creseyde his lady dere
With lokē down cast, & humble yolden chere
Lo, the alderfirst worde that him asterte
Was thrise, mercy, mercy swete herte

And stinte a whyle, & whā he myght out brig
The next worde was, god wote for I haue
As faythfully as I haue had konnyng
Ben yours al, god so my soule saue
And shal, tyl ꝑ I wofull wight be graue
And though I dare ne can vnto you playne
I wys I suffre not the lasse payne

Thus much as now, ah, womanyshe wyfe
I may out brīg, and if this you displese
That shal I wreke vpon myn owne lyfe
Right sone I trowe, and do your hert an ese
Yf with my deth, your hert may apese
But sens that ye han herde me somwhat sey
Now rede I neuer how sone ꝑ I dey

Therwith his manly sorowe to beholde
Je might haue made an hert of stone to reine
And Pandare wepte as he to water wolde
And poked euer his nece newe and newe
And sayde, wo begon ben hertes trewe
For loue of god, make of this thyng an ende
Or slee vs both at ones, er that ye wende

I, what(qō she) by god & by my trouthe
I not nat what ye wolde that I sey
Ey, what (qō he) that ye haue on him routhe
For goddes loue, and doth him nat dey
Now than thus(qō she) I wolde him prey
To tel me the fyne of his entente
Yet wiste I neuer wel what that he mente

What that I meane, O swete herte dere
(Qō Troylus) o goodly fresshe free
That with the stremes of your eyen clere
Ye wolden somtyme frendly on me se
And than agreen that I may ben he
Without en brāunche of vyce, on any wyse
In trouthe al way, to do you my seruyse

As to my lady right, and chefe resorte
With al my wit and al my dylygence
And to haue right as you lyste comforte
Vnder your yerde egall to myn offence
As deth, if that I breke your defence
And that ye deigne me so muche honour
Me to cōmaunden aught in any hour

And I to ben your bery humble trewe
Secrete, and in my paynes patyent
And euer to desyren freshly newe
To seruen, and to ben aye lyke dilygent
And with good herte, al holly your talent
Receyuen wel, how sore that me smerte
Lo, this meane I, myne owne swete herte

(Qō Pandarus) lo here an harde request
And resonable, a lady for to werne
Now nece myne, by Natall Joues fest
Were I a god, ye shulde sterue as yerne
That heren wel this man wol nothyng yerne
But your honour, & sen him almost sterue
And ben so loth to suffre him you to serue

With that she gan her eyen on him cast
Ful easely, and ful debonairly
Auysyng her, and hied not to fast
With neuer a worde, but sayd him softely
Myne honour safe, I wol wel trewly
And in suche forme, as I can nowe deuyse

Kepeyuen him fully to my reuerence

Beſechyng him for goddes loue, that he
Wolde in honour of trouthe and gentylneſſe
As I wel mente, ebe mennen wel to me
And myne honour, with wyt and beſineſſe
Aye kepe, and if I may done him gladneſſe
From hence forth, I wys I nyl not fayne
Now bethe al hole, no lenger ye ne playne

But natheleſſe, this warne I you (qd ſhe)
I kynges ſonne although ye be ywis
Ye ſhal no more haue ſouerayne
Of me in loue, than right in that caſe is
Ne nyl forbeare if that ye done amys
To wrathe you, and whyle that ye me ſerue
Cherysſhen you, right after that ye deſerue

And ſhortly dere herte, and al my knyght
Beth glad, and drawe you to iuſtyneſſe
And I ſhal truely, with al my ful myght
Your bytter turnen al to ſwetenneſſe
Yf I be ſhe, that may do you gladneſſe
For euery wo ye ſhal recouer a bliſſe
And him in armes toke, and gan him kyſſe

Fyl Pandarus on knees, and vp his eyen
To heuen threwe, and held his hondes bye
Immortal god (qd he) that mayeſt not dyen
Cupide I meane, of this mayſte glorifye
And Venus, thou mayſte maken melodye
Ayethouten honde, me ſemeth that in towne
For this myracle yche here eche bell ſowne

But ho, no more nowe of this matere
For why? this folke wol comen vp anone
That haue the letter redde, lo I hem here
But I conjure the Creſeyde, and one
And two, thou Troylus whā thou maiſt gon
That at myne houſe ye ben at my warnyng
For I ful wel ſhal ſhapen your comming

And eaſeth there your hertes right ynough
And let ſe which of you ſhal beare the bell
To ſpeke of loue aryght, & therwith he lough
For there haue I a leyſer for to tell
(Quod Troylus) how longe ſhal I dwell
Er this be done (qd he, whan ſ mayſt ryſe
This thing ſhal be right as you lyſt deuyſe

Wyth that Helenye, and alſo Deiphebus
Tho comen vpward, right at the ſtayres ende
And lorde ſo tho gan gronen Troylus
His brother and his ſuſter for to blende
(O Pandarus ſ tyme is that we wende
Take nede my your leaue at al tyde
And let hem ſpeke, ſ cometh forthe with me

She toke her leaue at hem ful ſhyttirely
As he wel coulde, & they her reuerence
Vnto the ful bydden hardely
And wonder wel ſpraken in her abſence
Of her, in prayſyng of her excellence
Her gouernaunce, her wyt, and her manere
Comendeden, that it ioye was to here

Now let her wende vnto her owne place
And turne we to Troylus agayne
That gan ful lyghtly of the letter pace
That Deiphebus had in the gardyn ſeyne
And of Helenye and him he wolde feyne
Deliuered ben, and ſayd that him leſte
To ſlepe, and after tales haue a reſte

Helenye him kyſſe, and toke her leue blyue
Deiphebus eke, and home went euery wight
And Pandarus, as faſte as he may dryue
To Troylus tho came, as lyue tyght
And on a pallet, al that glad myght
By Troylus he lay, with mery chere
To tale, & wel was hem they were yfere

Nā euer wight was boyded, but they two
And al the doores weren faſt yſhette
To tel in ſhorte, without wordes mo
This Pandarus, without any lette
Vp roſe, and on his beddes ſyde him ſette
And gan to ſpeken in a ſodre wyſe
To Troylus, as I ſhal you deuyſe

Myne alderleueſt lorde, and brother dere
God wot & thou, that it ſate me ſo ſore
Whan I the ſawe ſo languyſhyng to here
For loue of which thy wo woxe alway more
That I with al my might, and al my lore
Haue euer ſythen done my beſyneſſe
To bringe the to ioye out of diſtreſſe

And haue it brought to ſuch plyte as ſ woſt
So ſ through me thou ſtondeſt now in way
To fareu wel, I ſay it for no boſt
And woſt thou why, but ſhame it is to ſay
For the haue I begon a gameu play
Which that I neuer done ſhal efte for other
Al tho he were a thouſāde folde my brother

That

That is to say, for the am I becomen
Yerwyten game and ernest, suche a mene
Is maken women vnto men to comen
I say I nat, thou woste wel what I mene
For the haue I my nece, of yeres cleue
So fully made thy gentyllesse tryst
That al shal ben, right as thy selfe lyste

But god, that al wotteth take I to wytnesse
That neuer I this for couerysse wrought
But oncly for to abredge that distresse
For which wel nye ꝑ dyedest, as me thought
But good brother, do now as the ought
For goddes loue, and kepe her out of blame
Sens ꝑ art wyse, & saue al way her name

For wel thou woste, the name as yet of her
Amõges ꝑ people, as (who saith) halowed is
For that man is vnboze I dare wel swere
That euer wyst that she dyd amys
But wo is me, that I that cause al this
May thynken that she is my nece dere
And I her eme, and traytour eke yfere

And were it wiste, that I through mynengyn
Had in myn nece yput this fantasye
To done thy lust, and holly to be thyn
Al hy-at the wozlde wolde vpon it crye
And say, that I the wozste trecherye
Dyd in this cas, that euer was bezonne
And she forbone, & thou right nought ywonne

Wherfoze er I wol ferther gone oz paas
Yet ere I the beseche, and fully say
That priuete go with vs in this caas
That is to sayne, that thou vs neuer wray
And be not wzothe, though I the ofte pray
To holden secre suche an hygh matere
For skylful is (thou woste wel) my prayere

And thinke, what wo there hath betyd er this
For makyng of auauntes, as men rede
And what myschaunce in this wozlde yet is
Fro day to day, right for that wicked dede
For whiche the se wise clerkes that ben dede
Haue euer this prouerbed to vs yonge
That the first vertue is to kepe the tonge

And nere it that I wyne as nowe abredge
Diffusyon of speche, I coulde almost
A thousande olde stozies the aledge
Of women loste, throuz false and fooles bost
Prouebes canste thy selfe ynowe, & woste
Ayenst that dyer for to ben a blabbe
Al sayd men sothe, as often as they gabbe

O tonge alas, so often here before
Hast ꝑ made many a lady bright of hewe
Sayd, welaway the day that I was bozne
And many a maydens sozowe for to newe
And for the moze parte al is vntrewe
That men of yelpe, & it were brouzt to preue
Of kynde, none auauntour is to leue

Auauntour and a lyer, al is one
As thus. I pose a woman graunt me
Her loue, and sayth that other wol she none
And I am swozne to holden it secre
And after I tel it two oz thre
I wys I am auauntour at the leest
And lyer eke, for I breke my beheest

Now loke than, if they be not to blame
Such manet folk, what shal I clepe hẽ what
That hem auaunte of women, and by name
That yet behyght hem neuer this ne that
Ne knowe hem moze than myne olde hat
No wonder is, so god me sende heele
Thoughe women dreden vs bs men to deele

I say not this for no mistrust of you
Ne for no wyse men, but for fooles nyce
And for the harme that in the world is nowe
As wel for folye ofte, as for malyce
For wel wote I, in wyse folke that byde
No woman dredeth, if she be wel auysed
For wyse ben by fooles harme chastised

But now to purpose, leue brother dere
Haue al this thing ꝑ I haue sayde in mynde
And kepe the close, and be now of good chere
For al thy dayes thou shalt me trewe fynde
I shal thy processe set in suche a kynde
And god tofore, that it shal the suffyse
For it shal be, right as thou wolte deuyse

For wel I wote, thou meanest wel parde
Therfore I dare this fully vndertake
Thou woste eke, what thy lady graunted the
And day is set the chartres to make
Haue now good night, I may no leger wake
And byd for me, syth thou art nowe in blysse
That god the sende bothe, oz soone lysse

Who might tellen half the ioye oz feest
Which that the soule of Troylus tho felte
Heryng the fyfte of Panthasus beheest

His olde wo, that made his herte swelte
Gan tho for ioye wasten, and to melte
And al the rytheffe of his syghes sore
Ye ones ded, he felte of hem no more

But right so as these holtes, & these hayis
That han in winter dede ben and dry
Reuesten hem in grene, whan that May is
Whan euery lyfly lysteth to play
Right in that selfe wyse, sothe to say
Wore sodaynly his herte full of ioye
That gladder was ther neuer man in Troye

And gan his loke on Pandarus vp caste
Ful soberly, and frendly on to se
And sayd, frende, in Aprylle the laste
As wel thou wost, if it remembre the
How nygh the deth for wo thou founde me
And how thou dyddest al thy busynesse
To know of me the cause of my distresse

Thou wost how longe I it forbare to say
To the, that art the man that I best tryst
And peryl none was it to the to bewray
That wist I wel: but tel me if the lyste
Sythe I so lothe was, that thy selfe it wyste
How durste I more telle of this matere
That quake powe, & no wight may be here

But natheless, by that god I the swere
That as him lyst may al this world gouerne
And if I dye, Achylles with his spere
Myne herte cleue, al were my lyfe eterne
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it bewray, or durst, or thulde conne
For al the good that god made vnder sonne

That rather dye I wold, and determyne
As thynketh me nowe, stocked in prison
In wretchydnesse, in fyithe, and in vermyne
Captyfe to cruel kyng Agamenon
And this in al the temples of this towne
Upon the goddes al, I wol the swere
To morow day, if that the lyketh here

And that thou hast so moch ydon for me
That I ne may it neuer more deserue
This knowe I wel, al might I nowe for the
A thousande tymes on a morowe sterue
I can no more, but that I wol the serue
Right as thy saue, whyther so thou wende
For euer more, vnto my lyues ende

But here with al myn herte I the beseche
That neuer in me thou deme suche folye
As I shal sayne, me thought by thy speche
That this which thou me dost for cõpanye
I shulde wene it were a baudrye
I am not woode, al if I seude be
It is not so, that wot I wel parde

But he that goth for golde, or for rychesse
On such messages, cal him what ye lyste
And this that thou dost, cal it gentylnesse
Compassyon, and felowshyp, and tryst
Depaire it so, for wyde where is wyste
How that there is dyuersite required
Betwixen thinges lyke, as I haue desired

And that thou know I thinke not ne wene
That this seruice a shame be or vaye
I haue my fayre suster Polexene
Cassandre, Helcyne, or any of the fraye
Be she neuer so fayre, or wel yshape
Tel me, whiche thou wylte of euerychone
To haue for thyne, and let me than alone

But sith þ thou hast done me this seruyce
Myn lyfe to saue, and for non hope of mede
So for the loue of god, this great empryse
Parfourme it out, nowe is the moste nede
For hyghe and lowe, withouten any drede
I wol al ou- þ thyne desires al kepe
Haue nowe good nyght, & let vs both slepe

Thus helde hem eche of other wel apayde
That al the world ne might it bet amende
And on the morowe whan they were arayde
Eche to his owne nedes gan entende
But Troylus, though as the fyre he brende
For sharpe desyre of hope, and of plesaunce
He not forgate his good gouernaunce

But in him selfe, with mã hode gan restreyne
Eche rakel dede, and eche vnbridled chere
That al that tyuen sorte to sayne
Ne shuld haue wyst, by worde or by manere
What that he mene, as touchyng this matere
From euery wight, as ferre as is the cloude
He was so wyse, and well dissymuled coulde

And al the while whiche that I now deuyse
This was his lyfe, with al his ful myght
By day he was in Martes highe seruice
That is to sayne, in armes as a knyght
And for the more parte the longe nyght

he lay and thought how that he might serue
His lady best, her thanke for to deserue

Nyl I not sweare, although he lay softe
That in his thoughte nas somwhat diseased
Ne that he turned on his pylowes ofte
And wolde of that him myssed haue be eased
But in such case, men be not alway pleased
For naught I wot, no more than was he
That can I deme of possibylyte

But certayne is, to purpose for to go
That in this while, as writen is in geste
He sawe his lady somtyme, and also
She with him spake, whan þ she durst a leste
And by her both auyse, as was the beste
Apointeden ful warily in this nede
So as they durst, how they wold procede

But it was spoken in so shorte a wyse
In suche a wayte alway, and in suche fere
Lest any wight deuynen or deuyse
Or old of hem two, or to it lay an eere
That al this world so lefe to hem ne were
As that Cupide wolde hem grace sende
To maken of her speche right an ende

But thilke lytel that they spake or wrought
His wyse goost toke aye, of all suche hede
It semed her he wyste what she thought
Without en worde, so that it was no nede
To bid him aught to don, or aught forbede
For which she thought þ loue, al come it late
Of al ioye, had opened her the yate

And shortly of this processe for to pace
So wel his werke and wordes he besette
That he so ful stode in his ladyes grace
Twenty thousande tymes er she lette
She thonked god she euer with him mette
So couthe he him gouerne in suche seruyce
That al the worlde ne myght it bet deuyse

For she founde him so discrete in all
So secrete, and of suche obeysaunce
That wel she felte he was to her a wall
Of stele, and sheld of euery displesaunce
That to den in his good gouernaunce
So wyse he was, she was nomore afered
I meane as ferre as aught den required

And Pandarus to quicke alwaye the fyre
Was euer ylyke prest and dyligent
To ease his frende was set al his desyre
He shone aye on, he to and fro was sent
He letters bare whan Troylus was absent
That neuer man, as in his frendes nede
Ne bare him bet than he, without drede

But now parauēture some mā wayte wolde
That euery worde or sonde, loke or chere
Of Troylus, that I rehercen shulde
In al this while, vnto his lady dere
I trowe it were a longe thyng for to here
Or of what wight þ stante in suche disioynte
His wordes al, or euery loke to poynte

Forsothe I haue not herde it done er this
In storye none, ne no man here I wene
And though I wold, I couthe not ywis
For there was some epystel hem betwene
That wold (as sayth myn auctor) wel cōtene
Aye halfe this boke, of which hi list not write
How shulde I than a lyne of it endyte

But to the great effecte, than say I thus
That stondyng in concorde and in quyete
This ilke two, Creseyde and Troylus
As I haue tolde, and in this tyme swete
Haue onely often might they not mete
Ne leyser haue, her speches to fulfell
That it befyl, right as I shal you tell

That Pandarus, that euer did his myght
Right for the fyne that I shal speke of here
As for to bringen to his house some nyght
His fayre nece, and Troylus yfere
Where as at leyser al this hyghe matere
Touchyng her loue, were at þ ful vp bounde
Had out of doute a tyme to it founde

For he with great deliberacyon
Had euery thyng that therto might auayle
Forne cast, and put in execution
And neyther lefte for coste ne for trauayle
Come if hem lyste, hem shulde nothing fayle
And for to den in aught aspyed there
That wyste he wel an impossyble were

Diedelesse it clere was in the wynde
Of euery pye, and euery let gaine
Nowe al is wel, for al the world is blynde
In this mater, bothe fremed and tame
This tymber is al redy vp to frame
Vs lacketh naught, but that we weten wold
A certayne houre, in which she comen shulde

And Troylus, that al this purueyaunce
Knew at the ful, and wayted on it aye
And here vpon he made great ordynaunce
And founde his cause, & therwith his aray
Yf that he were myssed nyght or day
There while he was aboute this seruyce
That he was gone to done his sacrifyce

And musᵗ at suche a temple alone wake
Answered of Apollo for to be
And stille to sene the holy laurer quake
Er that Apollo spake out of the tree
To tel him next whan grekes shuld flye
And for thy let him no man, god forbede
But praye Apollo helpe in this nede

Now is there lytel more for to done
But Pandare vp, and shortly for to sayne
Right sone vpon the chaungynge of the moone
Whan lightlesse is ỳ worlds a night or twaine
And that the welken shope him for to rayne
He streyght a morowe vnto his nece wente
Ye haue wel herde the fyne of his entente

Whan he was comen, he gan anon to playe
As he was wont, and of him selfe to iape
And fynally he swore, and gan her saye
By this and that, she shuld him not escape
No lenger done him after her to cape
But certaynly, she musᵗ by her leue
Come soupen in his house with him at eue

At which she lough, & gan her first excuse
And sayd: it rayneth: lo, how shuld I gone
Let be (quo he) ne stonde not thus to muse
This more be don, ye shal come there anone
So at the last, herof they fel at one
Or els fal he swore her in her eere
He nolde neuer comen there she were

Sone after this, she to him gan rowne
And asked him if Troylus were there
He swore her nay, for he was out of towne
And sayd, nece: I pose that he were there
You durst neuer haue the more feere
For rather than men might him there aspye
We were leuer a thousande folde to dye

Naught lyst myne auctour fully to declare
What that she thought, whan he said so
That Troylus was out of towne yfare
And if he sayd therof soth or no
But that withouten awayte with him to go
She graunted him, sithe he her that besought
And as his nece obeyed as her ought

But nathelesse, yet gan she him beseche
(Although with him to gone it was no neede)
For to beware of goyng the peoples speche
That dremen thynges, which ỳ neuer were
And wel anyse him whom he brought there
And sayd him eme, sens I must on you triste
Loke al be wel, and do nowe as you lyst

He swore her this, by stockes and by stones
And by the goddes that in heuen dwell
Or els were him leauer soule and bones
with Pluto kyng, as depe den in hell
As Tantalus, what shulde I more tel
Whan al was wel, he rose and toke his leue
And she to souper came whan it was eue

With a certayne of her owne men
And with her layze nece Antigone
And other of her women nyne or ten
But who was glad nowe, who as trowe ye?
But Troylus, that stode and myght it se
Throughout a lytel wyndowe in a stewe
Ther he besshet, sith mydnyght was in mewe

Unwist of euery wight, but of Pandare
But to the poynt, now whan ỳ she was come
With al ioye, and al frendes fare
Her eme anon in armes hath her nome
And than to the souper al and some
Whan eyme was, ful softe they hem set
God wot there was no deynte fewer to fet

And after souper gonnen they to ryse
At ease wel, with herte fresshe and glade
And wel was him that conde best deuyse
To lyken her, or that her laughen made
He longe, she playde, he tolde a tale of Wade
But at the last, as euery thing hath ende
She toke her leaue, and nedes wolde wende

But o fortune, executrice of wyerdes
O influences of these heuens hye
Soth is, that vnder god ye den our hierdes
Though to vs dertes, den the causes wyse
This mene I now, for she gan homward hye
But execute was al besyde her leue
At the goddes wyl, for whiche she must bleue

The brente moone with her hornes pale
Saturnus & Ioue, in Cancro ioyned were
That

That suche a rayne from heuen gan auayle
That euery maner woman that was there
Had of that smoky rayne a verry feere
Ye which Pandare tho lough, & sayd thenne
Nowe were it tyme a lady to gone henne

But good nece, if I might euer please
You any thyng, than pray I you (quod he)
To don myn hert as nowe so great an ease
As for to dwel here al thys night with me
For why, this is your owne house parde
For by my trouthe, I say it nat in game
To wende as nowe, it were to me a shame

Creseyde, which that coulde as muche good
As halfe a worlde, toke hede of hys prayre
And sens it rayned, and al was in a flode
She thought, as good chepe may I dwel here
And graunt it gladly with a frendes chere
And haue a thoke, as grutche & than abyde
For home to gon it may nat wel betyde

I wol (quod she) myn vncle liefe and dere
Sens that you lyste, it shyl is to be so
I am right glad with you to dwellen here
I sayd but agame I wolde go
I wis graunt mercy nece (quod he) tho
Were it agame or no, sothe to tel
Nowe am I glad, sens that you list to dwel

Thus al is wel, but tho began aryght
The newe ioy, and al the first agayne
But Pandarus, if goodly had he myght
He wolde haue hyed her to bedde fayne
And sayd, lorde this is an huge rayn
This were a wether for to sleepen in
And that I rede vs soone to begyn

And nece, wote ye where I wol you lay
For that we shul nat lyggen ferre a sonder
And for ye neither shullen, dare I say
Here noyse of rayne, ne of thonder
By god right in my closet yonder
And I wol in that vtter house alone
Ben wardayn of your women euerychone

And in this myddle chambre that ye se
Shal your women slepen, wel and softe
And there I sayd, shal your seruen be
And if ye lyggen wel to myght, come ofte
And carethe not what wether is a lofte
The wyne anone, and whan so you leste
So we to slepe, I trowe it be the beste

There nys no more, but here after sone
They voyde, dronke, & trauers drawe anone
Gan euery wight that had nought to done
More in the place, out of the chambre gone
And euer more so stercelyche it rone
And blewe therwith so wonderlyche loude
That wel nigh no man heren other couthe

Tho Pandarus her eme, right as him ought
With women, suche as were her most aboute
Ful glad vnto her beddes syde her brought
And toke his leaue, and gan ful lowe loute
And sayd, here at this closet doze without
Right ouerthwart your women lyggen al
That whom ye lyste of hem, ye may sone cal

So whan that she was in the closet layde
And al her women forth by ordynaunce
I bedde weren, there as I haue sayde
There nas no more to skippen nor to prauce
But boden go to bedde with mischaunce
If any wight sterynge were any where
And let hem slepen, that a bedde were

But Pandarus, ỳ wel couthe eche adele
The olde daunce, and euery poynt therin
Ac hat that he sawe that al thing was wele
He thought he wolde vpon hys werke begin
And gan the strewe doze al soft vnpyn
As styl as a stone, without lenger lette
By Troylus adownright he hym sette

And shortly to the poynte ryght for to gone
Of al this werke he tolde him worde & ende
And sayd, make the redy ryght anone
For thou shalt in to heuen blysse wende
Nowe blysful Uenus, thou me grace sende
(Quod Troylus) for neuer yet no dede
Had I er nowe, ne halfendele the drede

(Quod Pandarus) ne drede the neuer a dele
For it shal be right as thou wolt deuise
Go thriue I, this night shal I make it wele
Or caste al the gruel in the fyre
yet blisful Uenus this night thou me enspire
(Quod Troylus) as wis as I the serue
And euer bet and bet shal tyl I sterue

And if I had, O Uenus ful of myrthe
Apeeres bodde of Mars, or of Saturne
Or thou combuste, or let were in my byrthe
Thy father pray, al thylke harme disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayen may turne

For loue of him thou louedest in the shawe
I meane Adon, ꝑ with the bore was slawe

Ioue eke, for the loue of fayre Europe
The which in forme of a bulle away thou fet
Now helpe, o Mars, thou vn thy blody cope
For loue of Cipria, thou me naught ne let
O Phebus, thilk whē Daphne her selue shet
Under the barke, & Laurer wore for drede
Yet for her loue, o helpe nowe at this nede

Mercurye, for the loue of her eke
For which Pallas was vn Iglauros wrothe
Nowe helpe, and eke Diane I the beseke
That this blage be nat to the lothe
O fatall sustren, whiche or any clothe
Ye shapen was, my destyne me sponne
So helpeth to tyys werke that is begonne

(Quod Pandarus) ꝑ wretched mouces hert
Art thou agast so that the wol the byte
Ah by, do on thys furred cloke vpō thy shertе
And folowe me, for I wol haue the wyte
But byde, and let me gon before alyte
And with that he gan vndone a trappe
And Troylus he brought in by the lappe

The sterne wynde so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse might here
And they that layen at the doze without
Ful sykerly they slepten al yfere
And Pandarus, with ful sobre chere
Goth to the doze anon withoutrn lette
There as they lay, and softly it shette

And as he came ayenwarde prively
His nece awoke, & asketh, who goth there
Ah dere nece (quod he) it am I
Be nowdrerh not, ne haue of it no fere
And nere he came, and sayd her in her ere
No worde for loue of god I you beseche
Let no wight aryse, & herein of our speche

What, which way be ye comen benedicite,
(Quod she) and howe vnwyste of hem al
Here at this secret trappe doze (quod he)
(Quod tho Creseyde) let me some wight cal
Eygh, god forbyd that it shulde so fal
(Quod Pandarus) that ye suche foly wrought
They might demen thig they neuer er thought

It is nat good a slepyng honde to wake
Ne yeue a wight a cause for to benyme
Your women slepen al, I vndertake
So that for hem the house men myght myne
And slepen wollen ryl the some shyne
And when my tale is brought to an ende
Vnwist ryght as I came, so wol I wende

Nowe nece myne, ye shul wel vnderstonde
(Quod he) so as ye women demen al
That for to holde in loue a man in honde
And hym her left and dere hert cal
And maken hym an howue aboue a cal
I mene, as loue an other in this mene whyle
She doth her selfe a shame, and hym a gyle

Nowe wherby that I tel you al this
Ye wote your selfe, as wel as any wight
Howe that your loue al fully graunted is
To Troylus, the worthyest wyght
One of the worlde, & therto trouth yplight
That but it were on hym alonge, ye nolde
Him neuer failen, whyle ye lyuen sholde

Nowe stonte it thus, that sith I fro you wente
This Troylus, right platly for to seyne
Is through a gutter by a pryuy wente
Into my chambre come in al this reyne
Vnwist of euery maner wight certayne
Saue of my selfe, as wisely haue I ioye
And by the fayth I owe to Priam of Troye

And he is come in suche payne and distresse
That but he be al fully woode by thys
He sodaynly more fal in to woodnesse
But if god helpe: and eaute why is thys
He sayth him tolde is of a frende of hys
How ꝑ ye shuld louen one, that hight Horaste
For sorow of which this night shalde his laste

Creseyde, which that al this wonder herde
Gan sodaynly aboute her hert colde
And with a sighe she sorowfully answerd
Alas, I wende who so tales tolde
Ah dere hert wolde me nat holde
So lightly faulse, alas conceytes wronge
What harm they don for now liue I to longe

Horaste alas, and falsen Troylus
I knowe him not, god helpe me so (quod she)
Alas, what wicked spirite tolde him thus
Nowe certes eme, to morowe me and I him se
I shal therof as full excusen me
As euer dyd woman, if hym lyke
And with that worde she gan ful sore syke

O god

O god (qꝺ̄ she) so worldly selynesse
Which clerkes callen false felicite
Ymedled is with many a bytternesse
Ful anguyshous, than is god wote (qꝺ̄ she)
Condicion of veyne prosperite
For either ioyes comen nat yfere
Ne is no wight hath hem alway here

O brotyl wele of mannes ioye vnstable
With what wight so thou be, or ꝑ who play
Either he wote, that thou ioy art muable
Or wote it nat, it mote ben one of tway
Nowe if he wote it nat, howe may he say
That he hath very ioye and sykernesse
That is of ignorauncе aye in derkenesse

Nowe if he wote that ioy is transytory
And every ioye of worldly thyng mote flye
Than euery tyme, he that hath in memory
The drede of lesyng, maketh hym, that he
May in no parfyte sykernesse be
And if to lese hys ioye, he fet a myte
Than semeth it, that ioy is worthe ful lyte

Wherfore I wol dyscryue in this materе
That trewely for aught I can espye
There is no very wele in this worlde here
But o thou wicked serpent Ielousye
Thou misbeleued, and envyous folye
Why hast thou Troylus made to vntrystе
That neuer yet agylte, that I wylle

(Qꝺ̄ Pandarus) thus fallen is thys caas
Why vncle myn (qꝺ̄ she) who tolde hym this
Why doth my dere herte thus, alas
Ye wote, ye nece myn (qꝺ̄ he) what is
I hope al shal be wel, that is amis
For ye may quenche al this, if that you lyste
And doth right so, I holde it for the beste

Ho that I do to morowe, ywis (qꝺ̄ she)
And god toforne, so that it shal suffyce
To morowe alas, that were fayre (qꝺ̄ he)
Nay nay, it may nat stonden in thys wyse
Fornece myne, this wyten clerkes wyse
That peryl is with dretchyng in drawe
Nay, suche abodes ben nat worthe an hawe

Nece, al thyng hath tyme I dare anowe
For whan a chambre a fyre is, or an hal
Wel more nede is, it sodaynly rescowe
Than to dispuren and aske amonges al
Howe the candle in the strawe is fal
Ah benedicite, for al amonge that fare
The harme is done, and farwel feldefare

And nece myne, ne take it nat a grefe
If that ye suffre him al nyght in this wo
God helpe me so, ye had hym neuer lefe
That dare I sayn, now there is but we two
But wel I wote that ye wol nat so do
Ye ben to wyse to done so great folye
To put hys lyfe al night in ieopardye

Had I hym neuer lefe, by god I wene
Ye had neuer thyng so lefe, (qꝺ̄ she)
Nowe by my thrifte (qꝺ̄ he) ꝑ shal be sene
For sithe ye make thys ensample of me
If iche al night wolde him in sorowe se
For al the treasour in the towne of Troy
I bydde god, I neuer mote haue ioy

Nowe loke than, if ye that ben hys lone
Shulde put his lyfe al nyght in ieopardy
For thing of nought, now be ꝑ god aboue
Nat onely this delay cometh of folye
But of malyce, if that I shulde nat lye
What, platly and ye suffre hym in distresse
Ye neither bounte done ne gentylnesse

(Quod tho Cryseyde) wol ye done o thyng
And ye therwith shal stynte al hys disease
Haue here and bere him thys blewe ryng
For there is nothyng might him better plese
Saue I my selfe, ne more his herte apese
And say my dere herte, that hys sorowe
Is causeles, that shal be sene to morowe

I ryngе (qꝺ̄ he) ye hasel wodes shaken
Ye nece myne, that ring must haue a stone
That might deed men a lyue maken
And suche a ring trowe I that ye haue none
Discrecion out of your herd is gone
That fele I nowe (qꝺ̄ he) and that is routhe
O time ylost, wel mayst thou curssen slouthe

Wote ye not wel that noble and hye corage
Ne sorowеth nat, ne stynteth eke for lyte
But if a foole were in a ialous rage
I nolde setten at his sorowe a myte
But lesse him with a fewe wordes whyte
In other day, whan that I might hym fynde
But thys thing stant al in another kynde

This is so gentle and so tender of herte
That vᵇ his deth he wol his sorowes wreche
For

For trust wel, howe sore that hym smerte
He wol to you no talous wordes speke
And for thy nece, er that his herte birste
So speke your selfe to hym of this matere
For with a worde ye may his hert stere

Now haue I tolde what perill he is in
And his comyng vnwist is to euery wight
Ne parde harme may there be none, ne syn
I wol my selfe be with you al thys night
Ye knowe eke howe it is your owne knight
And that by right, ye muste vpon him triste
And I al prest to serche him when you liste

This accident so pytous was to here
And eke so lyke a sothe, at prime face
And Troylus her knyght, to her so dere
His prime cōming, and the syker place
That though she byd him as than a grace
Considred al thinges as they stode
No wonder is, sens he byd al for goode

Creseyde answerde, as wisely god at reste
My soule bringe, as me is for hym wo
And eine ywis, fayne wolde I don the beste
If that I a grace had for to do so
But whether that ye diwel, or for him go
I am, tyl god me better vnyde sende
At Dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende

(Quod Pandarus) ye nece wol ye here
Dulcarnon is called flemyng of wretches
It semeth herd, for wretches wol nought lere
For very slouthe, or other wylful tetches
This is said by hem, þ be nat worth two fetches
But ye ben wise, & that ye han on hōde (ches
Nys neither harde, ne skylful to withstonde

Than eine (qō she) doth here of as you lyste
But er he come, I wol vp first aryse
And for the loue of god, sens al my tryste
Is on you two, and ye both bothe wyse
So werketh nowe, in so discrete a wyse
That I honour may haue, and he plesaunce
For I am here, al in your gouernaunce

That is wel sayd (qō he) my nece dere
There goode thryfte on þ wyse gentil herte
But hyggeth fyl, & raketh him right here
It nedeth nat no ferther for him sterre
And eche of you raketh other sorowes smerte
For loue of god, and Venus I the preye
For sone hope I, that wel shal ben moreye

This Troylus ful sone on knees him sette
Ful lowely, right by her beddes heed
And in his beste wise hys lady grette
But lorde so she woxe sodaynlyche reed
Ne though men shulde smiten of her heed
She coulde nat o worde a right out bringe
So sodaynly for hys sodayne comynge

But Pandarus, that so wel coulde frie
In euery thing, to play anon began
And sayd, nece, se howe this lorde gan knele
Nowe for your trouthe, se this gentil man
And with that worde, he for a quisshen ran
And sayd, kneleth nowe while þ thou ieste
There god your herte bring sone at reste

Can I naught sayn, for she bad him nat ryse
If sorowe it put out of her remembraunce
Or ris that she toke it in the wise
Of duetie, as for his obseruaunce
But wel fynde I, she byd him this plesaunce
That she him byd, al though she syked sore
And bad him sit adowne withouten more

(Quod Pandarus) nowe wol ye worll begin
Nowe doth hym sitte, good nece dere
Upon your beddes syde, al there within
That eche of you the bet may other here
And with that worde he drew him to þ fyre
And toke a light, & founde his countenaunce
As for to loke vpon an olde romaunce

Creseyde that was Troylus lady right
And clere sholde in a grounde of sykernesse
Al thought she her seruaunt & her knyght
Ne shulde none vnreuthe in her gesse
That nat herselfe, considred hys distresse
And that loue is in cause of suche folye
Thus to him spake she of his ialousye

Lo dere myne, as wolde the excellence
Of loue, ayenst the whiche þ no man may
Ne ought eke goodly make resistence
And eke bycause I felte wel and say
Your great trouth, and seruyce euery day
And þ your herte al mine was, soth to sayne
This drove me for to rewe vpon your payne

And your goodnes haue I forsiden alway yet
Of whiche my dere hert, and al my knyght
I thanke it you, as ferre as I haue wit
Al can I nat as much as it were right
And I remforth my conning and my myght
Haue,

pane,and dye shal,how sore that me smert
Sen to you trewe and hole with al myn hert

And yet beseche that shal be founden at preue
But herd myne,what al this is to sayne
Shal wel be told,so that ye nouse you greue
Though I to you rist on your self cõplayne
For there with meane I finally payne
That haste your hert & myne in trouthe
fully to slayne,and euery wronge redresse

My good myne,nor I,for why ne howe
That trouthe alas,thus wicked wyues
Thus causeles is troden in to you
The harme of whiche I wolde fayn deliuere
As,that be al hole or ell hym slyuere
Shalde haue his refute in so digne a place
That Ioue;him sone out of your hert race

But o thou,o auctour of nature
Is this an honour to thy dignite
That folke vngrity suffren here iniure
And whe that gylty is,al quite gothe he
O were it leful for to playne of the
That vndeserued suffres ialousye
O,that I wolde vpon the playne and crye

Ehe al my wo is this,that folke nowe dsen
To sayne right thus:ye,ialousye is loue
And wolde a bushel of venym al excusen
For that a grane of loue is on it shone
But that wote high Ione that syt aboue
If it be lyket loue,hate,or grame
And after that it ought deute hys name

But certayne is,some maner ialousye
Is excusable,more than some ywis
As whan cause is,and some suche fantasye
With pyte so wel expressed is
That it vnneth dothe or sayth amis
But goodly drinketh vp al hys bytterne
And that excuse I for the gentylnesse

And some so ful of fury is,and despite
That it surmounteth hys expression
But herd myne,ye be nat in that plyte
That thonke I god,for which your passion
I wol nat cal it but illusyon
Of habondaunce of loue,and bely cure
That doth your hert this disese endure

Of whiche I am sory,but nat wrothe
But for my deuoir and your hertes reste
Where so you lyste,by ordal or by othe
By score,or in what wise so you leste
For loue of god,let prest it for the beste
And yf that I be gylty,do me dye
Alas,what might I more done or sey

With that a fewe bright teeres newe
Out of her eyen fel,and thus she seyde
Now god ȳ wost,in thouse ne dede vntrewe
To Troylus was neuer yet Cresseyde
With that her hed down in the bed she leyde
And with the shete it wrighe,a sighed sore
And held her pese,nat a word spake she more

But now helpe god,to quenche al this sorow
So hope I that he shal,for he beste may
For I haue sene of a ful mysty morowe
Folowen ful oft a mery somers day
And after wynter foloweth grene May
Men sene alday,and reden eke in storyes
That after sharpe shoures ben victoryes

Thys Troylus,when he her wordes herde
Haue ye no care,hym lyst nat to slepe
For it thought him no strokes of a yerde
To here or se Cresseyde his lady wepe
But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe
For euery teare whiche that Cresseyde aserte
The crampe of deth,to strayn him by ȳ herte

And in hys mynde he gan the tyme acurse
That he came there,and that he was borne
For nowe is wicke turned in to worse
And al that labour he hath done before
He wende it lost,he thought he nas but lorne
O Pandarus thought he,alas thy wyle
Serueth of nought,so welaway the whyle

And therwithal he hyng adowne hys hed
And fel on knees,and sorowfully he sight
What might he sayn?he felte he nas but ded
For wrothe was she ȳ shuld his sorowes lyst
But natheles,whan that he spoken might
Than said he thus,god wote ȳ of this game
Whan al is wyst,than am I nat to blame

Therwith the sorowe of hys herte shette
That from his eyen fel there nat a teere
And euery spirite hys vrgoun to knette
So they astonyed or oppressed were
The feling of sorowe,or of his fere
Or of aught els,sledde were out of towne
Adowne he fel al sodaynly in swoune

This

Thys was no lytel sorowe for to se
But al was buther, & pandare by as faste
O mece peace, or we be lost (qǒ he)
Beth nat agaste, but certayne at laste
For this or that, be in to bedde hym caste
And sayde, O theke, is this a mannes herte
And of he crepte al to hys bare-sherte

And seyd nere, but ye helpe vs nowe
Alas, your owne Troylus is lorne
Iwis so wolde I, and I wyste howe
Ful sayne (qǒ she) alas that I was borne
Ye nece, wol ye pulten out the thorne
That stycketh in hys hert (qǒ pandare)
Say al forgeue, and slynt is al this fare

Ye that to me (qǒ she) ful leuer were
Than al the good the sunne aboute gothe
And therwithal she swore him in hys ere
Iwis my dere hert I am nat wrothe
Have here my trouth, a many an other othe
Nowe speke to me, for it am I Creseyde
But al for naught, yet might he nat abreyde

Therto his poulce, & pannes of his hondes
They gan to frote, & were his teples twayne
And to delyure hym fro bytter bondes
She eft hym kyste, and shortly for to sayne
Hym to rewaken she dyd al her payne
And at the laste he gan his brethe to drawe
And of his swough sone after that adawe

And gan her mynde, and resun to hym take
But wonder sore he was abashed ywis
And with a sygh whan he gan her awake
He seyd, O mercy god, what thing is this
Why do ye with your servaunt thus amys
(qǒ tho Creseyde) is this a mannes game
What Troylus, wol ye do thus for shame

And therwithal her arme ouer him she layde
And al forgaue, and ofte tyme hym kyste
He thonked her, and to her spake and sayde
As fyl to purpose, for hys hertes reste
And she to that answerde him as her leste
And with her goodly wordes him disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorowes to comforte

(qǒ Pandarus) for aught I can aspyen
This light nor I ne serven here of naught
Lyght is nat good for sicke folkes eyen
But for the loue of god, sens ye ben brought
In this good pyne, let now non hevy thought
Ben hangyng in the hertes of you tuey
And bare the candle to the chimney

Soone after this, though it no nede were
Whan she suche othes as her lyst deuyse
Had of hym take, her thought tho no fere
Ne cause ete none, to byd hym thence ryse
Yet lesse thyng than othes may suffyse
In many a case, for euery wight I gesse
That loueth wel, meaneth but gentylnesse

But in effecte she wolde wete anone
Of what man, and ete were, and why
He ialous was, sens there was cause none
And ete the signe that he toke it by
She bade hym that to tel her besyly
Or elis certayne she bare hym on honde
That this was done of malyce her to fonde

Withouten more, shortly for to sayne
He must obey vnto hys ladyes beste
And for the laste harme he moste sayne
He sayde her, whan she was at suche a feste
She might on him have loked at the leste
Not I nat what, al dere ynough a cyche
As he that nedes moste a cause fyche

And she answerde, swete, al were it so
What harme was ỹ, sens I non ylle meane
For by thru god that bought vs both two
In al thing is myne entent cleane
Suche argumentes ne be nat worth a bene
Wol ye the childishe ialous counterfete
Nowe were it worthy that ye were shete

Tho Troylus gan sorowfully to syke
Lest she be wroth, him thought his hert deyde
And sayd, alas, vpon my sorowes syke
Have mercy swete hert myne Creseyde
And if that in tho wordes that I seyde
Be any wronge, I wol no more trespace
Doth what you lyst, I am al in your grace

And she answerde, of gylte misericorde
That is to sayne, that I forgeue al this
And euermore on this night you recorde
And beth wel ware ye do no more amys
Nay dere hert myne (qǒ he) ywis
And nowe (qǒ she) that I have you bysemte
Forgeue it me, myn owne swete hertte
This Troylus with blisse of that supprised
Put al in goddes hande, as he that mente
Nothyng but wel, and sodaynly auysed

He

he her in armes fall to him hente
And Pandarus, with a ful good entent
Layde him to slepe, & sayde, if ye be wyse
Me neuereth not now, lest more folke aryse

What myght or may the fry larke say
What? the sparhauke hath him in his fote
I can no more, but of these yike tway
To whom this tale sugre be or soote
Though I tarye a yere, somtyme I mote
After myne auctour tellen her gladnesse
As wel as I haue tolde her heuynesse

Creseyde, whiche that felte her thus ytake
(As writen clerkes in her bokes olde)
Right as an aspen leffe she gan to quake
Whan she him felt her in his armes folde
But Troylus al hole of cares colde
Gan thanken tho the blysful goddes seuen
Through sodry paines to brig folke to heuen

This Troylus in armes gan her strayne
And sayd swete, as euer mote I gone
Me we be ye caught, here is but we twayne
Me we yelderh you, for other boote is none
To that Creseyde answerde thus anone
Alas had I er now, my swete herte dere
Ben yolde twis, I were nowe not here

O, soth is sayd, that healed for hurt be
Is of a feuer, or other great sickneffe
Wen muft drinken, as we ofte se
Ful bytter drinke, and for to haue gladneffe
Wen drinken ofte payne, and great distreffe
I meane it here by, as for this auenture
That through a payn hath foude al his cure

And now swetneffe semeth more swete
That bytterneffe assayed was byfore
For out of wo in blysse nowe they flete
Now such they felten sens they were borne
Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorne
For loue of god, take euery woman hede
To werken thus, if it come to the nede

Creseyde al quyte from euery drede and tene
As she that fulle cause had him to tryste
Made him such feeft, it ioye was to sene
Whan she his trouth & clene entent wyste
And as about a tree with many a twyste
Bytrent and writhe the swete woodbynde
Can clyp of hem in armes other wynde

And as the newe abashed nightyngale
That stynteth first, whan she begynneth fyng
Whan that she heareth any herdes tale
Or in the hedges any wight stiryng
And after fyker dothe her voyce out rynge
Right so Creseyde, whan her dred stente
Opened her herte, & tolde him her entent

And right as he that seeth his deth ychapen
And dyen mote, in aught that he may gesse
And sodainly rescous dothe him escapen
And from his dethe is brought in sykernesse
For al this worlde, in suche present gladnesse
Was Troylus, and hath his lady swete
With worse happe god let vs neuer mete

Her armes smal, her streight backe & softe
Her sydes longe, fleshlye, smothe, and white
He gan to stroke, & good thrifte bad ful ofte
Her snowysse throte, her brestes rounde & lite
Thus in this heuen he gan him to delyte
And therwithal a thousande tymes her kyste
That what to done for ioye vnneth he wyste

Than sayd he thus, O loue, O charyte
Thy mother eke, Citherea the swete
That after thy selfe, next heryed be she
Uenus I meane, the wel willy planete
And next that, Mercurius I the grete
For neuer man was to you goddes holde
As I, which ye haue brought fro cares colde

Benigne loue, thou holy bonde of thinges
Who so wol grace, & lyst the not honouren
Lo, his desire wol flye withouten wynges
For nouldest thou of bountie hem socouren
That seruen best, and most alway labouren
Yet were al lost, that dare I wel sayne certes
But if thy grace passed our desertes

And for thou me yet lest thonke coude deserue
Of hem that nombred ben vnto thy grace
Hast holpen, there I lykely was to sterue
And me bestowed in so highe a place.
That thilke boundes may no blysse pace
I can no more, but laude and reuerence
Be to thy bounte and thyne excellence

And therwithal Creseyde anon he kyst
Of which certayne she felte no disease
And thus sayd he, now wolde god I wyst
Myne herte swete, how I you myght please
What man (quod he) was euer thus at ease

As fro which the fayrest, and the best
That euer I sey, depneth her to rest

Here may men sene that mercy passeth right
The experience of that is seine in me
That am vnwoxthy to so swete a wight
But herte myne, of your benignite
So thinke, that though I vnwoxthy be
Yet mote I nede amenden in some wyse
Right thzough the vertue of your hye seruise

And for the loue of god my lady dere
Sith he hath wzought me for I shall you fere
As thus I meane: wol ye be my frere (ue
To do me lyue, if that you lyst, oz sterue
So teacheth me, how that I may deserue
Your thonke, so þ I through myn ignozaunce
Ne do not thyng that you be displesaunce

For certes fresshe womanlyche wyse
This dare I say, that trouth and dylygence
That shal ye fynden in me al my lyse
Ne I wol nat certayne bzeken your defence
And vf I do, present oz in absence
For loue of god, let slee me with the dede
Yf that it lyke vnto your womanhede

Ywis (quod she) myne owne hertes lyke
My grounde of ease, and all myne herte dere
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trust
But let vs fal away fro this matere
For it sufficeth, this that sayde is here
And at o word, whouten repentaunce
Welcome my knyzt, my peace, my sufficsaunce

Of her delyte oz loyes, one of the leste
Were impossyble to my wyt to say
But iugeth ye, that haue ben at the feste
Of suche gladnesse, if that him lyst play
I can no moze, but thus these two ben tway
That nyght, betwyxen dzede and sykernesse
Felten in loue the great woxthynesse

O blysful nyght, of hem so longe ysought
Howe blythe vnto hem both two thou were
Why ne had I such frest to my soule ybought
Ye, oz the lest ioye that was there
Away thou foule daunger and thou frere
And let hem in this heuen blysse dwell
That is so hygh, that al ne can I tell

But soothe is, though I can not tellen all
As can myne auctour of his excellence
Yet haue I sayde, and god to forme shall
In euery thing al holy his sentence
And if that I, at loues reuerence
Haue any wozde in eched for the best
Doth therwith al right as your seruen lest

For my wozdes here, and euery parte
I speke hem all vnder correccion
Of you that felyng haue in loues arte
And put it all in your diffeccion
To encrease oz make diminucion
Of my langage, and that I you beseche
But now to purpose of my tather speche

These tyke two that berbe in armes large
So lothe to hem a sonder gon it were
That eche from other wenden ben bystake
Oz eis so, this was her moste feare
That al thys thing but vyce dzames were
For whiche ful ofte eche of hē said, o swete
Clyppe I you thus, oz eis do I it mete

And lokde so he gan goodly on her se
That neuer his loke ne bleynte from her face
And sayd, o dere herte may it be
That it be sothe, that ye ben in this place
Ye herte myne, god thanke I of his grace
(Quod tho Creseyde) & therwith al sim kyste
That where her spirite was, for ioy she wyste

Ē is Troylus ful ofte her eyen two
Gan for to kysse, & sayd: O eyen clere
It weren ye that wzought me suche wo
Ye humble neres of my lady dere
Though there be merey writē in your chere
God wote the texte ful harde is for to fynde
How coude ye, withouten bonde me bynde

Therwith he gan her fast in armes take
And wel an hundzed tymes gan he syke
Not suche sozowful syghes as men make
For wo, oz eis whan that folke de syke
But easy syghes, suche as ben to lyke
That shewed his affection withinne
Of suche syghes coulde he not blynne

Sone after this, they spake of sodry thinges
As fyl to purpose of thys auenture
And playeng, cutrechaunged her rynges
Of whiche I can not tellen no scripture
But wel I wot, a broche of golde and asure
In whiche a rubye set was lyke an herte
Creseyde him yaue, & stacke it on his sherte

Lord

Lo the trowe ye that a couetous wrecche
That blameth loue, and halte of it dispyte
That of tho pens that he can mucke & kecche
Was euer yet yeue to him suche deyte
Is is in loue, in o poynt in some plyte
Nay doutlesse, for als god me saue
So parfyte loye may no nygarde haue

They wol say yes, but lorde so they lye
Tho bely wrecches ful of wo and drede
That callen loue a woodnesse of folye
But it shal fal hem, as I shal you rede
They shal forgon the white & eke the rede
And lyue in wo, thet god yeue hē mischaunce
And eurry louer in his trouthe avaunce

As wolde god tho wrecches, that dispyse
Heruyce of loue, had eares also longe
As had Mida, ful of couetyse
And therto dronken had as hotte and stronge
As Cresus dyd, for his affectes wronge
To teachen hem, that they ben in the vyce
And louers not, although they holde hem nice

These ylke two, of whom ꝑ I you say
Whan that her hertes wel assured were
Tho gonnen they to speke and to play
And eke rehercenhowe, whan, and where
They knewe first, & euery wo or freere
That passed was, but al suche heuynesse
I thonke it god, was turned to gladnesse

And euermore, whan that hem fell to speke
Of any thinge of suche a tyme agon
With kyssyng al that tale shulde breke
And fallen in to a newe loye anon
And bydden al her myght, sens they were one
For to renouelen blysse, and ben at eyse
And payed wo with loye countrepeyse

Reason wol not that I speke of slepe
For it acordeth not to my matere
God wote they toke of it ful lytell kepe
But lest this nyght that was to hem so dere
Ne shulde in dayne escape in no manere
It was bylet in loye and besynesse
Of al that sowneth in to gentylnesse

But whan the cocke, cōmune astrologer
Gan on his brest to beate, and after crowe
And Lucifer, the dayes messanger
Gan for to rise, and out her beames throwe
And estward rose, to him ꝑ could it knowe
Fortune maior, that anon Creseyde
With herte sore, to Troylus thus seyde

Myne hertes life, my trust, al my plesaunce
That I was borne alas, that me is wo
That day of vs mote make disseuraunce
For tyme it is to ryse, and hence go
Or els I am lost for euer mo
O nyght alas, why nylt thou ouer vs houe
As longe as whan Alcmena lay by Joue

O blacke nyght, as folke in bokes rede
That shapen art by god, this world to hyde
At certayne tymes, with thy derke wede
That vnder that men might in rest abyde
Wel oughtē beestes to playn, & folke to chyde
That there as day ye labour wold vs brest
That thou thus flyest, & deynest vs not rest

Thou dorst alas, to shortly thyne office
Tho rakle nyght, there god maker of kynde
The for thyne hast, & thyne vnkynde vyce
So fast aye to out hemyspery bynde
That neuermore vnder ꝑ grounde ꝑ wynde
For nowe for thou so hyest out of Troye
Haue I forgone thus hastely my loye

This Troylus, that with tho wordes felte
As thought him tho, for pytous distresse
The bloody teares from his hert melte
As he that yet neuer suche heuynesse
Assayed had, out of so great gladnesse
Gan therwithal Creseyde his lady dere
In armes straine, & holde in lowely manere

O cruel day, accuser of the loye
That nyght & loue haue stole, & false ywrie
Accursed be thy cōmyng in to Troye
For euery bore hath one of thy bright eyen
Enuyous day, what lyst the so to spyen
What hast thou lost, why sekest ꝑ this place
There god thy lyght so quench for his grace

Alas, what have these lowers the agylte
Dispytous day, & thyn be the payne of hell
For many a louer hast thou slayne, & wylt
Thy comyng in wol no where let hem dwel
What profrest thou thy lyght here for to sell
Go sel it hem that smale seales graue
We wol the not, vs nedeth no day haue

And eke the sonne Tytan gan he chyde
And sayd, O foole, wel may men the dispyse

That hast al nyght the dawnyng by thy syde
And suffrest her so soone vp to ryse
For to disease vs louers in this wise
What hold your bed, thefe ꝑ and thy morowe
I byd god so yeue you both sorowe

Therwith ful sore he sygheb, & thus he seyde
My lady right, and of my wele or wo
The wel & roote, o goodly myn Creseyde
And shal I dye alas, and shal I so
Nowe fele I that myn herte mote a two
And how shuld I my lyfe an houre saue
Sens that with you is al the lyfe I haue

What shal I done for certes I not howe
Ne whan alas, I shal the tyme se
That in this pyne I may ben efte with you
And of my lyfe god wote howe shal that be
Sens that desyre eyght nowe so byteth me
That I am deed anon, but I retourne
Howe shulde I long alas, fro you sojourne

But natheleſſe, myne owne lady bryght
Were it so that I wyste vtterly
That your humble seruaunt, & youre knyght
Were in your herte yset so fermely
As ye in myne, the whiche trewly
Me leuer were than these worldes twayne
Yet shuld I bet endure al my payne

To that Creseyde answerde right anon
And with a syghe she sayd, O herte dere
The game iwys so ferforth now is gon
That first shal Phebus fallē from the sphere
And euerych Egle ben the douues fere
And euery rocke out of this place sterte
Er Troylus go out of Creseydes herte

Ye ben so depe within myne herte graue
That tho I wold it turne out of my thought
As wisely bery god my soule saue
To dyen in the payne, I couldē nought
And for ꝑ loue of god, that vs hath wrought
Let in your brayne none other fantasye
So crepe, that it cause me to dye

And that ye me wold haue as fast in mynde
As I haue you that wold I you beseche
And if I wist sothly that to fynde
God might not apoynt my ioyes eche
But herte myne, withouten more speche
Bethe to me trewe, or els were it routhe
For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe

Bethe glad for thy, and lyue in sykernesse
Thus sayd I neuer er this, ne shal to mo
And if to you it were a great gladnesse
To turne ayen sone after that ye go
As fayne wolde I as ye, it were so
As wisely god myn herte bryng to reste
And him in armes take, and ofte kesse

Ayenst his wyll, sithe it mote nedes be
This Troylus vp rose and fast him redde
And in his armes toke his lady free
An hūdred tymes, & on his way him spedde
And with suche wordes, as his hert bledde
He sayd: farewel my dere herte swete
That god vs graunt sounde & sone to mete

To which no word for sorow she answerde
So sore gan his partyng her distrayne
And Troylus vnto his paleys ferde
As wo bygon as she was, forth to fayne
So hard him wrōg of sharpe desyre ꝑ payne
For to ben efte there he was in pleasaunce
That it may neuer out of his remēbraunce

Retourned to his royal paleys sone
He softe vnto his bed gan for to synke
To slepe longe, as he was wonte to done
But al for nought, he may wel lygge & wynke
But slepe may there non in his herte synke
Thinking how she, for whō desyre him brēde
Al hole was worth more than he wende

And in his thought, gan vp & down to wrende
Her wordes al, and euery countenaunce
And fermely impressen in his mynde
The lest poynte, that to him was pleasaunce
And berely of thilke remembraunce
Desyre al newe him brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, & yet toke he none hede

Creseyde also, right in the same wyse
Of Troylus gan in her herte shette
His worthynesse, his lust, his bedes wyse
His gentrynesse, and how she with him mette
Thonkyng loue, he so wel her besette
Desyring ofte to haue her herte dere
In suche a place as she durst make hym chere

Pandare a morowe, which ꝑ comē was
Vnto his nece, and gan her fayre greete
And sayd, al this nyght so rayned it alas
That al my drede is, that ye neces swete
Haue lytel leyser had to slepe and meete

This night (qd he) hath rain to do me wake
That some of vs I trowe her heedes ake.

And nere he came & sayd, how stant it now
This mery morow, nece how can ye fare
Cryseyde answerde, neuer the bet for you
For that ye ben, god yeue your herte care
God helpe me so, ye causeles al this fare
Trowe I (qd she) for al your wordes whyte
O who so seeth you, knoweth you ful lyte

Wyth that she gan her face for to wrye
With the shete, and woxe for shame al reed
And Pandarus gan vnder for to prye
And sayd neer, yet that I shal ben deed
Haue here a swerde, and smyteth of my heed
With that his arme, al sodaynly he thrist
Vnder her necke, and at the laste her kyst

I passe al ꝑ, whyche chargeth naught to say
What, god forgaue his death, and she also
Forgaue: and with her vncle gan to play
For other cause was there none than so
But of this thing right to the effecte to go
Whan tyme was, home to her house she went
And Pandare hath fully his entent

Now futher we ryen to Troylus
That restlesse ful longe a bed lay
And prively sent after Pandarus
To him to come in al the haste he may
He come anon, not ones sayd nay
And Troylus ful soberly he grette
And downe vpon the beddes syde him sette

This Troylus with al thassertioun
Of frendly loue, that herte may deuyse
To Pandarus on knees fyl adowne
And er that he wolde of the place aryse
He gan him thanken on his beste wyse
An hundred tyme he gan the tyme bicalle
That he was borne, to bring him to disease

He sayd, o frende of frendes, the alderbest
That euer was, the sothe for to tel
Thou hast in heuen ybrought my soule at rest
Fro Phlegeton the fyry floode of hel
That though I might a thousande tymes sel
Vpon a day my lyfe in thy seruise
It might not a mote in that suffyse

The sonne, which ꝑ al the world may se
Saw neuer yet my lyfe, that dare I ley
So holy, fayre, and goodly, as is she
Whose I am al, and shal ryl that I dey
And that I thus am hers, dare I ley
That thanked be the high worthynesse
Of loue, and eke thy kynde besynesse

Thus hast thou me no lytel thyng yeue
For why to the obliged be for aye
My lyfe, & why: for through thin helpe I liue
Or elis deed had I ben ago many a day
And with that word down in his bed he lay
And Pandarus ful soberly him herde
Tyl al was sayd, and than he him answerde

My dere frende, if I haue done for the
In any caste, god wote it is me leefe
And am as glad as man may of it be
God helpe me so, but take nowe not agreefe
That I shal sayne, beware of this mischefe
That there as nowe brought art to thy blisse
That thou thy selfe, ne cause it not to mysse

For of fortunes sharpe aduersyte
The worste kynde of infortune is thys
A man to haue ben in prosperyte
And it remembre, whan it passed is
Thou art wise ynough, for thy do nat amys
Beyond to rakel, though thou syt warme
For if thou be, certayne it wol the harme

Thou art at ese, and holde the wel therin
For also sure as redde is euery fyre
As great a craft is to kepe wel as wynne
Bridle alway wel thy speche and thy desyre
For worldly ioye holdeth not but by a wyre
That prouerth wel, it brest alday so ofte
For thy nede is to werken with it softe

(Qd Troylus) I hope, and god to borne
My dere frende, that I shal so me beere
That in my gylte there shal no thig ben lorne
Ne I nyl not rakle, as for to greuen here
It nedeth not this mater ofre tere
For wyssest thou myne herte wel Pandare
God wote of this thou woldest lyte care

Tho gan he tel him of his glad nyght
And wherof first his hert dradde, and howe
And sayd frende, as I am trewe knyght
And by that fayth I owe to god and you
I had it neuer halfe so hote as nowe
And aye the more that desyre me byteth
To loue her best, the more it me deliteth

I not my herte nat wherby, what it is
But now I fele a newe qualyte
Ye al another than I hyd er this
Pandare answerde & sayd thus, thus he
That ones may in heuen blysse be
He seketh other wayes dare I lay
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it say

This is a worde for al, that Troylus
Was neuer ful to speke of this matere
And for to prayse vnto Pandarus
The bounte of his right lady dere
And Pandarus to thanke, & maken chere
This tale was aye span newe to begynne
Tyl that the nyght departed hem a twynne

Soone after this, for that fortune it wolde
Ipomen was the blyssful tyme swete
That Troylus was warned, that he sholde
There he was erst, Creseyde his lady mete
For which he felte his herte in ioye flete
And faithfully gan al the goddes hery
And let se now, yf that he can be mery

And holden was the forme, and al the gyse
Of her commyng, and of his also
As it was erst, whiche nedeth nought deuyse
But playnly to the effecte right for to go
In ioye and sureté Pandarus hem two
Abedde brought, whan hem bothe lest
And thus they ben in quiete and in rest

Nought nedeth it to you, sithe they ben met
To aske at me, if that they blythe were
For if it erst was well, tho was it bet
A thousande folde, this nedeth not enquere
I go was euery sorowe and euery fere
And bothe ywis they had, and so they wende
As moche ioye as herte may comprehende

This nys no lytel thynge of for to sey
This passeth euery wyt for to deuyse
For eche of hem gan others lyke obey
Felycite, which that these clerkes wyse
Commenden so, ne may not here suffise
This ioye ne may not ywritten be with ynke
This passeth al that herte may bethynke

But cruel day, so welaway the stounde
Gan for to approche, as they by sygnes knewe
For which hem thought felé derkes wounde
So wo was hem, that changen gan her hewe
And day they gonnen to dispise al newe
Cursyng it ryght sowre, enuyous and worse
And bytterly the bayes lyght her corse

(Quod Troylus) alas, nowe am I ware
That enuyous, and thou fyrste fedest thyne
Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes chare
Han gon some bypathe in dispite of me
And maketh it so sone day to be
And for the same him hasteth thus to ryse
Ne shal I neuer don him sacrifyse

But nedes day departe hem muste sone
And whan her speche don was, & her chere
They twyes anon, as they were wont to done
And setten tyme of meryng efte yfere
And many a tyme they myoust in this manere
And thus fortune a tyme ladde in ioye
Creseyde, and eke this kynges son of Troye

In suche sesonne, in blysse, & in syngynges
This Troylus gan al his lyfe to lede
He spendeth, iusteth, & maketh festynges
He geueth freely ofte, and chaungeth wede
He helde aboute him alwaye out of drede
A worlde of folke, as come him wel of kynde
The freshest, and the best he couthe fynde

That suche a noyse was of him, & a stenen
Throughout ỳ worlde, of honour and largesse
That it vnrange vnto the yate of heuen
And as in loue he was in suche gladnesse
That in his herte he demed, as I gesse
That there nys louer in this worlde at ese
So wel as he, and thus gan loue him plese

The goodlyhede or beaute, which ỳ kynde
In any other lady had yshette
Can not the mountenaunce of a gnat vnbynde
Aboute his herte, of al Creseydes nette
He was so narowe ymashed, and yknette
That is vnbon an any manes syde
That nyl nas ben, for aught that may betyde

And by the houde ful ofte he wolde take
This Pandarus, and in to gardyn lede
And suche a feest, and suche a processe make
Hym of Creseyde, and of her womanhede
And of her beaute, that without drede
It was an heuen his wordes for to here
And than he wolde synge in this manere

Loue, that of erthe & see hath gouernaunce
Loue, that his herdes hath in heuen hye

Loue

Lone, that with an hoffoure al pasmee
Halse people loyned, as hym lyste hem gye
Lone, that knitteth lawe and compasse
And couples doth in vertue for to dwel
Bynde this accorde, thou I haue tolde a tel

That, ȳ the world with faith, which ȳ is stable
Diuerseth so his stoundes accordyng
That elementes that ben so discordable
Holden a bonde, perpetually durying
That Phebus mote his rody day forth bring
And ȳ the mone hath lordshyp ouer ȳ nyghtes
At this dothe loue, aye heried be his mightes

That, that the sea, that gredy is to flowen
Constrayneth to a certayne ende so
Hys floodes, that so fiersly they ne growen
To drenchen erthe and al for euer mo
And if that loue aught let hys bridel go
Al that nowe loueth a lowder shulde lepe
And lost weue al, ȳ loue hath nowe to kepe

Wo wolde to god, that auctour is of kynde
That with his bonde, loue of his vertue lasse
To serchen hertes al, and faste bynde
That frō his bōde no wight ȳ wey out wasse
And hertes colde hem, wolde I ȳ hem twasse
To makē hem loue, & that lasse hem aye rewe
On hertes sore, & kepe hem that ben trewe

Thal nedes for the townes werre
He was, and aye the first in armes dight
And certaynly, but if that bokes erre
Haue hertor, most ydradde of any wight
And this encrease of hardynesse and might
Come him of loue, his ladyes thanke to wyn
That altered hys spyrite so within

In tyme of truce on hawkyng wolde he ryde
Or eis hunt bore, beare, or lyoun
The smal bestes let he gon besyde
And whan ȳ he come rydyng in to the toun
Ful ofte his lady frō her windowe downe
Is frethe as faucon, comen out of mue
Ful redely was him goodly to salue

And most of loue & vertue was his speche
And in dispyte had al wretchednesse
And doutelesse no nede was him bestrehe
To honouren hem, that had worthynesse
And esen hem, that weren in distresse
And glad was he, if any wyght wel ferde
That louer was, whan he it wist or herde

For sothe to sayne, he lost helde euery wighte
But if he were in loues high seruyce
I meane folke that aught it ben of right
And ouer al this, so wel couthe he deuyse
Of sentement, and in so vncouthe wyse
Al hys array, that euery louer thought
That al was wel, what so he said or wrought

And thoughe that he be come of blode royal
Hym tyst of pryde, at no wight for to chace
Benigne he was to erthe in general
For which he gate hym thanke in euery place
Thus wolde loue, yheryed by his grace
That pryde and yre, enuye, and auarycę
He gan to flye, and euery other vyce

Thou lady bryght, the doughter of Diane
Thy blynde & winged sonne eke dan Cupide
Ye lustren nyne eke, that by Helycone
In hyl Pernaso, lysten for to abyde
That ye thus ferre han deyned me to gyde
I can no more, but sens that ye wol wende
Ye heryed ben for aye withouten ende

Through you haue I said fully in my songe
The sorowe and ioye of Troylus seruyce
Al be that there was some diuersite amonge
As myne auctour lysteth to deuyse
My thirde boke nowe ende I in this wise
And Troylus in luste and in quiete
Is with Creseyde, his owne herte swete

Explicit liber tercius.

But al to litel, welaway the whyle
Lasteth suche ioye, yblessed be fortune
That semeth trewest, whan she wol begyle
And can to fooles her songe entune
That she hem hent, ȳ biem traytour cōmune
And whan a wight is frō her whele ithrowe
Than laugheth she, & maketh him the mowe

From Troylus she gan her bryght face
Away to writhe, and toke of him non hede
And caste hym clene out of his ladyes grace
And on her whele she set vp Diomede
For which myn herte right now gynneth bledde
And nowe my pen alas, with which I write
Quaketh for drede, of that I must endyte

For howe Cresseyde Troylus forsoke
Or at the leste, howe that she was vnkynde
Wote I nought for-thy, ben mater of my boke
As writ folke, through which it is in mynde
Alas that they shulde ever cause fynde
To speke hem harme, & if they on hem lye
Iwis hem self shulde have the vylanye

O ye herynes nightes doughters thre
That evermore complayne ever in payne
Megera, Alecto, and eke Tesyphone
Thou cruel Mars eke father of Quiryne
Thys ylke fourth boke helpe me to fyne
So that the loos, and love, and ylke yfere
Of Troylus be fully shewed here

¶ Incipit liber quartus.

Ye ryding in hoste, as I have sayde er this
The grekes stronge, aboute Troy toune
Byfell, that whan that Phebus shyning is
Upon ỹ brest of hercules Lion
That Hector, with many a bolde baron
Came on a day with grekes for to fight
As he was wont, to greve hem what he myght

Not I howe longe or short it was byfore
This purpose, & that day they fighten meute
But on a day wel armed bright and shene
Hector & many a worthy knyght out wente
With spere in honde, & bygge bowes bente
And in the berde withouten lenger lette
Her foomen in the felde anon hem mette

The long day with speares sharpe ygrounde
With arowes, dartes, swerdes, & maces fel
They fight, & dynge, & hurtle hors, & manne grounde
And with her axes out the braynes quel
But in the laste shoure, soothe to tel
The folke of Troy hem selven so misdeden
That with ỹ worse at night home they fledde

At whiche day was taken Anthenor
Maugre Polymydas, or Monestro
Fantrype Sarpedon, Palestynus
Polyte, or ek the Troyan dan Riphebe
And other lasse folke, as Polydore
So that for harme ỹ day the folke of Troye
Sorden to lese a great parte of her joye

Of Priamus sone yeve, at gerdes requeste
A tyme of treste, and tho they gonnen trete
Her prisoners to chaungen in ordre and lete
And for the surplus yeven somes grete
This tyding anon was couthe in every strete
Bothe in chastelle, in towne, and every where
And wish the firste is come to Calcas ere

Whē Calcas knew this tretise shulde holde
In consistorie amonge the grekes sone
He gan to thinke, forthe with lordes olde
And sir hym ryere as he was wont to done
And with a chaunged face, hem bade anone
For love of god, so done that reverence
To hyren noyse, & yeve hym audience

Than sayd he thus, Ie lordes myne I was
Troyan, as it is knowen out of byrde
And if that you remembre, I am Calcas
That al derkest yaue counsayl to your nede
And telde wel howe that you shulde spede
For dyebrieste thorough you shal in a stounde
Ben Troy ỹbrent, & brente down to grounde

And in what forme, or in what manere wyse
This towne to shende, & all your lust atchyve
Ye have er this wel herde me devyse
This know ye my lordes, as I trust
And for the grekes weren me so leve
I came my self in my proper persone
To teche hem this, howe you was best to done

Having unto my traysour, se my trust
Myght so regarde, so respecte of your ese
Thus al my good I lefte, and to you wende
Weninge in this you lordes for to plese
But al that lefte me dere me no disese
I vouchsafe, as wisely have I joye
For you to lese, al that I have in Troye

Save of a doughter that I lefte, alas
Sleping at home, wist out of Troye I stal
O herte, O cruel fader that I was
Howe might I have in that so hard an herte
Alas that I not had brought her in my herte
For sorowe of which I wol nat live to morowe
But if ye lordes rewe upō my sorowe (wise

For bycause that I have noyse ensured
Her to delyver, ich holden have my pes
But nowe or never, if that it lyke you
I may her have right nowe dowtelees
O help and grace, amonge al this prees

Yeve

Rewe on thys olde caytyfe in distresse
Sith I through you haue all thys heuynesse

Ye haue nowe caught, and fettred in prison
Troyans knowe, and if your wylles be
My childe with one may haue redemption
Howe for the loue of god, and of bounte
Doe of so fele alas, so yefe hym me
What nede were it this prayer for to werne
Sith ye shul haue, both folke & town as yern

On peryl of my lyfe I shal nat lye
Apollo hath me tolde ful faythfully
I haue eke founde by astronomy
By sort, and by augury trewelye
And dare wel say the tyme is fast by
That fire & flambe on all ꝑ town shal sprede
And thus shal Troye turne to ashen dede

For certayne Phebus, and Neptunus bothe
That makeden the walles of the toun
Ben vn to the folke of Troye alway so wrothe
That they wol bring it to confusyoun
Right in dispyte of kyng Lamedoun
Because he nolde payen hem her hyre
The towne of Troye shal ben set on fyre

Cryinge bys tale alway this olde grey
Humble in hys speche and lokyng eke
The salt terres from hys eyen two
Ful fast ronnen downe by either cheke
So longe he gan of socour hem beseke
That for to beale him of his sorowes sore
They gaue him Antenor, withouten more

But who was glad ynough but Calcas tho
And of this thing ful sone hys nedes leyde
On hem that shulden for the treyse go
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To bringen home kynge Thoas, & Creseyde
And whan Priam hys safegarde sente
Thembassadours to Troy streyt they went

The cause I tolde of her cõming, the olde
Priam the kyng, ful sone in generall
Let here vpon his parlyment holde
Of whiche the effect rehersed you I shal
Thembassadours ben answerde for fynal
The eschaunge of prisoners, & al this nede
Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede

This Troylus was present in the place
Whan asked was for Antenor Creseyde
For whiche ful sone chaungen gan his face
As he that with tho wordes wel nigh deide
But nathelesse he no worde to it seyde
Leste men shulde hys affection espye
With mannes herte, he gan his sorowes drye

And ful of angwyshe and of gresly drede
Abode, what other lordes wold to it sey
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede
Theschaũge of her, thẽ thought he thigs two
First, howe to saue her honor, & what way
He might best theschaũce of her withstonde
Ful fast he caste howe al this might stonde

Loue hym made al prest to done her byde
And rather dyen, than she shulde go
But Reason sayd hym on that other syde
Withouten assent of her, do nat so
Lest for thy werke she wolde be thy foe
And sayn, ꝑ through thy medling is yblowe
Your bother loue, ther it was erst vnknowe

For whiche he gan deliberen for the beste
And though the lordes wolde that she went
He wolde let hem graunt what hem leste
And tel his lady first what that they ment
And when that she had sayd him her entent
Therafter wolde he worken also blyue
Tho al the worlde ayen it wolde stryue

Hector which that wel the grekes herde
For Antenor, how they wold haue Creseyde
Gan it withstonde, and soberly answerde
Sirs, she nys no prisoner (he seyde)
I not on you who that this charge leyde
But on my parte, ye may excusen hem wel
We vsen here, no women for to sel

The noyse of people vp stert them atones
As brimme as blase of strawe yset on fyre
For infortune it wolde for the nones
They shulden her confusyon desyre
Hector (qõ they) what gost may you enspire
This woman thus to shilde, & hope vs lese
Dan Antenor, a wronge way now ye chese

That is so wise, and eke so bolde baroun
And we haue nede to folke, as men may se
He is one the greatest of thys toune
O Hector, lette thy fantasyes be
O kyng Priam (qõ they) thus segge we
That al our boyce is to forgone Creseyde
And to deliuer Antenor they preyde

O Juuenal lorde, trewe is thy sentence
That yet wenen folke what is to yerne
That they ne fynden in her desyre offence
For cloude of errour lette hem discerne
What best is, and so, here ensample as yerne
These folke desiren nowe delyuerance
Of Antenor, yb wrought hem to mischance

For he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troy alas, they quitte him out to rathe
O nyce worlde, lo thy discrecyon
Creseyde, which that neuer did hem scathe
Shal nowe no lenger in her blisse bathe
But Antenor, he shal come home to towne
And she shal out, thus sayd here & howne

For whiche delibered was by parlyment
For Antenor to yelden out Creseyde
And it pronounced by the president
Though that Hector nay ful ofte prayde
And finally, what wight that it withsayde
It was for naught, it must ben, and sholde
For substaunce of the parlyment it wolde

Departed out of the parlyment echone
This Troylus, without wordes mo
Vnto his chambre spedde him faste alone
But if it were a man of hys or two
The whiche he bad out faste for to go
Because he wolde slepen, as he sayde
And hastely vpon his bedde him layde

And as in winter leaues ben byraft
Eche after other tyl trees be bare
So yt there nis but barke and braunche ylaft
Lyth Troylus, byraft of eche wel fare
Ybounden in the blacke barke of care
Disposed wode out of his witte to breyde
So sore him sate the chaunging of Creseyde

He ryst him vp, and euery dore he shette
And windowe eke, & tho this sorowful man
Vpon hys beddes syde downe hym sette
Ful lyke a dede ymage, pale and wan
And in his brest the heuped wo began
Out bruste, and he to worken in this wise
In his woodnesse, as I shal you deuyse

Right as the wilde bulle begynneth springe
Nowe here nowe there, ydarted to the herte
And of his deth roreth, in complaynyng
Right so gan he about the chambre sterte
Smiting his brest, aye vb his fystes smerte
His heed to the wall, his body to yt grounde
Ful ofte he swapte him seluen to confounde

His eyen two for yre of hys herte
Out stremeden as fyre as welles rwey
The highe sobbes of his sorowes smerte
Hys speche him refte, vnmethes might he sey
O derthe alas, why nyl thou do me dey
Accursed by that day whiche that nature
Shope me to ben a lyues creature

But after whan the fury and al the rage
Whiche that his hert twyste, and faste threst
By length of tyme somewhat gan aswage
Vpon hys bedde he layde him downe to rest
But tho begon his teares more out to brest
That wonder is the body may suffyse
To halfe this wo, which that I you deuyse

Than sayde he thus: Fortune alas the while
What have I done, what have I the agilte
Howe mightest thou for routhe me begyle
Is there no grace, and shal I thus be spilte
Shal thus Creseyde awaye for yt thou wilt
Alas, how mightest thou in thyn herte fynde
To ben to me thus cruel and vnkynde,

Have I the nat honoured al my lyue,
As thou wel wotest, aboue the goddes al
Why wylt thou me fro ioy thus depryue
O Troylus, what may men nowe the cal
But wretche of wretches, out of honour fal
Into misery, in whiche I wol bewayle
Creseyde alas, tyl that the breth me fayle

Alas Fortune, if that my lyfe in loye
Displeased had vnto thy foule enuye
Why ne haddest yt my father kynge of Troye
Byraft the lyfe, or done my brethren dye
Or slayne my selfe, yt thus complayne & crye
I combre worlde, that may of nothyng serue
But euer dye, and neuer fully sterue

If that Creseyde alone were me lafte
Naught rought I whyder yt woldest me sterte
And her alas, thā hast thou me byraft
But euermore, lo thys is thy maniere
To reue a wight, that moste is to him dere
To preue in that thy gierfull byolence
Thus am I lolle, there helpeth no defence

O very lorde, O loue, O god alas
That konnest best min hert, & al my thought

what

What shal my sorowful life done in this caas
If I forgo that I so dere haue dought
Sens ye Creseyde & me haue fully brought
Into your grace, and both our herres sealed
Howe may ye suffer alas it be repealed

What I may done I shal, whyle I may dure
To lyue, in turment and in cruel payne
Thys infortune, or this disauenture
Alone as I was borne I wol complayne
Ne neuer wol I sene it shyne or rayne
But ende I wol as Edippe in derkenesse
My sorowful lyfe, and dyen in distresse

O wery gost, that erres to and fro
Why nyle thou flyen out of the wofullest
Body that euer might on grounde go
O foule, lurkyng in thys woful nest
Fye forthout myn hert, and let it breste
And folowe alway Creseyde thy lady dere
Thy right place is nowe no lenger here

O woful eyen two, sens your dysporte
Was al to sene Creseydes eyen bryght
What shal ye done, but for my discomforte
Weden for naught, & wepen out your syght
Sens she is queynt, ȳ wont was you to lyst
Beyne from this forth haue I eyen twey
Fermed, sens your vertue is awey

O my Creseyde, O lady souerayne
Of this woful soule that thus cryeth
Who shal nowe yeuen comfort to thy payne
Alas no wyght, but whan myn hert dyeth
My spirite, whiche that so vnto you hyeth
Receyue in gree, for that shal aye you serue
For thy no force is, though the body sterue

O ye louers, that hygh vpon the whele
Ben sette of Fortune, in good auenture
God sende that ye fynden aye loue of stele
And longe more your lyfe in ioy endure
But when ye comen by my sepulture
Remembreth that your felowe resteth there
For I loued eke, though I vnworthy were

O olde vnholsome and mislyued man
Calcas I meane, alas what eyled the
To ben a greke, sens thou art borne Troian
O Calcas, whiche that wolt my bane be
In cursed tyme was thou borne for me
As wolde blisful Ioue for hys ioye
That I the had where I wolde in Troye

A thousande syghes hotter than the glede
Out of hys brest, eche after other wente
Medled with playnt newe, hys wo to fede
For whiche his woful teeres neuer stente
And shortly so hys sorowes hym to rente
And wore so mate, that ioy or penaunce
He feleth none, but lyeth in a traunce

Pandare, whiche that in the parlyment
Had herde what euery lorde & burgeys seyd
And howe ful graunted was by one assent
For Antenor, to yelden out Creseyde
Gan wel nigh wode out of his wit to breyde
So that for wo he nyste what he mente
But in a rage to Troylus he wente

A certayne knyght, that for the tyme kepte
The chambre doore, vndyd it hym anone
And Pandare that ful tenderly wepte
In to the derke chambre as styl as stone
Towarde the bedde gan softly to gone
So confuse, that he nyst what to say
For very wo, his witte was nigh away

And with chere and lokyng al to torne
For sorowe of this, & with his armes folden
He stode this woful Troylus beforne
And on hys pytous face he gan beholden
But so ofte gan hys hert colden
Seyng his frende in wo, whose heurnesse
His hert slough, as thought hym for distresse

This woful wight, this Troylus ȳ felte
Hys frende Pandare ycomen hym to se
Gan as the snowe ayenst the sunne melte
For whiche this woful Pandare, of pyte
Gan for to wepe, as tenderly as he
And specheles thus ben these ylke twey
That neither might for sorowe o worde sey

But at the laste, this woful Troylus
Nigh deed for smert, gan bresten out to crye
And with a sorowful noyse he sayd thus
Amonges hys sobbes, and his syghes sore
Lo Pandare I am deed, withouten more
Haste thou nat herde at parlyment he seyde
For Antenor howe loste is my Creseyde

This Pandare ful deed and pale of hewe
Ful pytously answerde, and sayde yes
As wisely were it false as it is trewe
That I haue herde, and wote al howe it is
O mercy god, who wolde haue trowed this

Who wold haue wende þ in so lytel a throw
Fortune our ioye wolde haue ouerthrowe

For in this worlde there is no creature
As to my dome, that euer sawe ryne
Straunger thē this, through cas or auēture
But who may al eschue or al deuyne
Suche is this worlde, for thy I thus define
Me trust no wyght to fynde in Fortune
Ye propertye, her yefres ben cōmune

But tel me this, why thou art nowe so mad
To sorowen thus, why lyke þ in this wise
Sens thy desire al holly hast thou had
So that by ryght, it ought ynough suffice
But I that neuer felte in my seruyce
A frendly chere or lokyng of an eye
Let me thus wepe and wayten tyl I dye

And ouer al thys, as thou wel wost thy selue
This towne is ful of ladyes al aboute
And to my dome, fayrer than suche twelue
As euer he was, shal I fynde in soure route
Ye one or twey, withouten any doute
For thy be glade myn owne dere brother
If she be lorne, we shal recouer an other

What god forbid alway that eche pleasaūce
In o thynge were, and in non other wyght
If one can synge, another can wel daunce
If this be goodly, she is glad and lyght
And this is fayre, and that can good aryght
Eche for hys vertue holden is for dere
Bothe heroner and faucon for ryuere

And eke as writ zanzis, that was ful wyse
The newe loue out chaseth ofte the olde
And vpon newe case lyeth new auyse
Thinke eke thy selfe to sauen art thou holde
Suche fyre by processe, shal of kynde colde
For sens it is but casuel pleasaunce
Some case shal put it out of remembraunce

For also sure as day cometh after night
The newe loue, labour, or other wo
Or els selde seyng of a wyght
Done olde affections al ouer go
And for thy part, thou shalt haue one of tho
To abredge with thy bytter paynes smerte
Absence of her, shal dryue her out of herte

These wordes sayde he for the nones all
To helpe his frende, lest he for sorow deyde
For doutelesse to done his wo to fal
He raught nat what vnthryfte that he seyde
But Troylus that nygh for sorowe deyde
Toke lytel hede, of al that euer he mente
One erre it herde, at the other out it wente

But at the laste he answerde, & sayde frende
This lecherafte, or healed thus to be
Were wel fytting, if that I were a fende
To trayen a wight, that trewe is vnto me
I pray god let this counsayle neuer the
But do me rather sterue anone right here
Er I thus done, as thou me woldest lere

She that I serue ywis, what so thou seye
To whom myn hert enhabyte is by right
Shal haue me holly hers tyl that I deye
For Pandarus, sens I haue trouth her hight
I wol nat ben vntrewe for no wyght
But as her man I wol aye lyue and sterue
And neuer non other creature serue

And ther thou sayest thou shalt as fayre fynde
As she, let be, make no comparyson
To creature yformed here by kynde
O leue Pandare, in conclusyon
I wol nat ben of thyn opynyon
Touchyng al this, for whiche I the beseche
So holde thy peace, þ sleest me with thy speche

Thou bydd'st me I shulde loue another
Al freshely newe, and let Creseyde go
Je lythe nat in my power leue brother
And though I might, yet wolde I nat do so
But canst thou playen raket to and fro
Nettle in dock out, now this now þ wyse
Nowe foule fal her for thy wo that care

Thou farest eke by me Pandarus
As he, that whan a wight is wo bygon
He cometh to hym a pace, & sayth right thus
Thynke nat on smerte, & thou shalt fele none
Thou mayst me first transmewen in a stone
And reue me my passyons al
Or thou so lyghtly do my wo to fal

The deth may well out of my brest departe
The lyf so longe may thys sorowe myne
But fro my soule shal Creseydes darte
Out neuermore, but down with Proserpine
Whan I am dede, I wol wonne in pyne
And there I wol eternally complayne
My wo, & how that I twynned be we twayne

Thou

Thou hast here made an argument for tyne
owe that it shulde lasse payne be
Creseyde to forgon, for she was myne
And lyued in ease and in felycite
Why gabbest thou, that saydest vnto me
That him is worse þ is fro wele ythrowe
Than he had erst none of that wele knowe

But tel me nowe, sens þ the thynketh so light
To chaungen so in loue aye to and fro
Why hast thou nat done besily thy might
To chaungen her, that doth the al thy wo-
Why nyte thou let her fro thyne hert go-
Why nyte thou loue another lady swete
That may thine hert setten in quiete-

Yf thou hast had in loue aye yet mischaunce
And canst it not out of thyne hert dryue
I that lyued in lust and in plesaunce
With her, as moche as creature on lyue
Howe shuld I that foryet, and that so blyue
O where hast thou ben hyd so longe in mewe
That canst so wel and formelyche argewe

May god wote, naught worth is al thy rede
For whiche, for what that euer may befall
Withouten wordes mo I wol ben deed
O deth, that endest of sorowes all
Come nowe, sens I so ofte after the call
For sely is that dethe, forth for to sa.
That ofte yclcped, cometh and endeth payne

Wel wote I, whyle my lyfe was in quiete
Er thou me slewe, I wold haue yeuen hyre
But nowe thy cõmyng is to me so swete
That in this world, I nothyng so desyre
O dethe, sens with this sorowe I am a fyre
Thou eyther do me anon in teeres drenche
Or with thy colde stroke myne hert quenche

Sens that þ sterst so sele in sondry wyse
Arrest her wyll, vnprayed day and nyght
Do me at my requeste this seruice
Deliuer now the worlde, so dostu right
Of me that am the wofullest wight
That euer was, for tyme is that I sterue
Sens i this world of right nauzt do I serue

This Troylus in teeres gan distyll
As lycour out of allambyke ful faste
And Pandarus gan holde his tonge styll
And to the grounde his eyen downe he caste
But natheles, thus thought he at laste
What parde, rather than my felow dey
Yet shal I somwhat more vnto him sey

And said frende, sens þ hast such distresse
And sens the lyst myne argumentes blame
Why nyle thy seluen helpe done redresse
And with thy manhode letten al this game
Go rauysh her, ne canste thou not for shame-
And eyther let her out of towne fare
Or holde her styl, and leaue thy nyce fare

Art thou in Troye, & hast non hardyment
To take a wight, which that loueth the
And wold her seluen ben of thyn assent
Nowe is nat this a nyce vanyte
Rise vp anon, and let this wepyng be
And sythe thou art a man, for in this hour
I wol ben deed, or she shal ben our

To this answerde him Troylus ful softe
And sayd, iwys my leue brother dere
Al this haue I my selfe yet thought ful ofte
And more thyng than thou deuysest here
But why this thig is lakt, þ shalt wel here
And whan thou hast me yeuen audyence
Thereafter mayst thou tel al thy sentence

First sin þ wost this toun hath al this werre
For rauyshyng of women so by myght
It shuld not ben suffred me to erre
As it stonte nowe, ne done so great vnright
I shuld haue also blame of euery wight
My fathers graunt if that I so withstode
Sens she is chaunged for the townes gode

I haue eke thought, so it were her assent
To aske her at my father of his grace
Than thinke I, this were her accusement
Sens wel I wot I may her nat purchace
For sens my father in so high a place
As parlyment, hath her eschaunge enseled
He nyl for me his lettre be repealed

Yet drede I most her hert to perturbe
With vyolence, if I do suche a game
For if I wolde it openly disturbe
It must be disclaundre to her name
And me were leuer dye than her diffame
As nolde god, but I shulde haue
Her honour, leuer than my lyfe to saue

Thus am I loste, for aught that I can se
For certayne is that I am her knight

I must her honour leuer haue than me
In euery cas, as louer ought of right
Thus am I with desyre and reason twyght
Desyre for to disfourdon her me rederth
And reason nyl not, so myne hert dredeth

Thus wepyng, that he coulde neuer cease
He sayd alas, how shal I wyth the fare
For wel frie I alway my loue encrease
And hope is lasse and lasse Pandare
Encreasen eke the causes of my care
So welaway, why nyll myn hert breste
For as in loue there is but lytel reste

Pandare answerde, frend thou mayst for me
Done as the lyst, but had I it so hote
And thyne estate, she shuld go with me
Tho al this town cried on this thing by note
I nolde set at al that noyse a grote
For whā mē haue cried than wol they roun
Eke wōder last but .ix. dayes neuer in toun

Deuyne not in reason aye so depe
Ne curtesly, but helpe thy selfe anone
Bet is that other than thy seluen wepe
And namely sens ye two ben al one
Ryse vp, for by myne herd she shal not gone
And rather be in blame a lytel yfounde
Thā sterue here as a gnat vnbuten woūde

It is no shame vnto you ne no vice
Her to withholden, that ye loueth moste
Paraventure she myght holde the for nyce
To letten her go thus vnto the grekes hoste
Thynke eke fortune, as wel thy seluen woste
Helpeth hardy man vnto his emprise
And weyueth wrecches, for her cowardyse

And though thy lady wolde alyte her greue
Thou shalt thy selfe thy peace herafter make
But as to me certayne I can not leue
That she wold it as now for yuel take
Why shuld than for feare thyn hert quake
Thynke how Paris hath, that is thy brother
Alone, and why shalt thou not haue another

And Troylus, o thyng I dare the swere
That if Cresseyde, whiche that is thy lefe
Now loueth the, as wel as thou doest here
God helpe me so, she nyl not take a greue
Though thou do boote anon in this mischefe
And yf she wyneth fro the for to passe
Than is she false, so loue her wel the lasse

For thy take herte, & thinke right as a knyght
Thrugh loue is broken alday euery lawe
Rythe now somwhat thy corage & thy myght
Haue mercy on thy selfe for any awe
Let not this wrecched wo thyne hert gnawe
But manly set the world on syxe & seuen
And if thou dye a martyr go to heuen

I wol my selfe ben with the at this dede
Though I and al my kyn vpon a stounde
Shuld in a strete, as dogges lyggen dede
Thrugh gyxte with many a blody wounde
In euery cas I wol a frende be founde
And if the lyketh here sitten as a wrecche
A dieu, the dyuel spede him that reccheth

This Troylus gan vn tho wordes quicken
And said frende, graunt h[illegible], I assent
But certaynly thou mayst nat so me pricken
Ne payne none ne may me so turment
That for no case, it is not myne entent
At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde
To ranyshen her, but if her selfe it wolde

Why, so meane I (qō Pādarus) al this day
But tel me than, hast p̄ her wel assayde
That sorowest thus, & he answerde him nay
Wherof art thou (qō Pādare) than dismaide
That noste not p̄ she wol ben yuel apayde
To ranishen her, sens thou hast not ben there
But if that Ioue tolde it in thyn ere

For thy ryse vp as naught ne were anon
And washe thy face, & to the kyng p̄ wende
Or he may wondren whyder thou art gon
Thou must vn wisedom, him & other blende
Or vpon case he may after the sende
Or thou beware, and shortly brother dere
Be glad, & let me werke in this matere

For I shal shape it so, that sykerly
Thou shalt this nyxt somtime in some manere
Come speken with thy lady pryuely
And by her wordes eke, as by her chere
Thou shalt ful sone aperceyue & wel here
Of her entent, and in this case the beste
And fare now wel, for in this poynt I reste

¶ The swyfte fame, which p̄ false thynges
Equal reporteth lyke the thynges trewe
Was throughout Troy isted, vn prest wynges
Fro man to man, and made his tale al newe
How Calcas doughter with her bright hewe

Ot parlement without wordes more
Igraunted was, in chaunge of Antenore

The which tale anon right as Creseyde
Had herd, she which ꝑ of her father roughte
(As in this case) right nawȝt, ne whā he deyde
Ful besyly to Jupiter besought
Yeue hem mischaūce, ꝑ this tretys brought
But shortly lest these tales sothe were
She durst at no wight asken it for feere

As she that had her hert and al her mynde
On Troylus yset so wonder fast
That al this world ne mȝt her loue vnbinde
Fro Troylus out of her hert caste
She wold ben his, while ꝑ her lyfe may laste
And she thus bremeth both in loue and drede
So that she nyst what was best to rede

But as men sene in towne, and al aboute
That women liken her frendes to visyte
So to Creseyde of women came a route
For pytous loye, and wenden her delyte
And with her tales dere ynough a myte
These women, which that in the cyte dwell
They set hem downe, and sayd as I shal tell

(Qō first that one) I am glad trewly
Because of you, that shal your father se
Another sayd, ywis so am not I
For al to lyttel hath she with vs be
(Qō tho the thirde) I hope iwys that she
Shal bringen vs the peace on euery syde
That whan she goth, almighty god her gyde

Tho wordes and tho womanysshe thynges
She herd hem ryȝt as though she thēce were
For god it wote, her herte on other thing is
Although the body sat among hem there
Her aduertence is alway els where
For Troylus ful fast her soule sought
Without en worde, on him alway she thought

These women ꝑ thus wenden her to plese
Aboute naught gonne al her tales spende
Suche bante ne can done her none ese
As she that al this meane whyle brende
Of other passyon than they wende
So that she felte almoste her herte dye
For wo, and wery of that companye

For which might she no lenger restrayne
Her teres, they gan so vp to well
That gaue signes of her bytter payne
In whiche her spirite was, and must dwell
Remembryng her from heuen vnto which hel
She fallen was, sens she forgo the lyght
Of Troylus, and sorowfully she syght

And thylke fooles, syttyng her aboute
Wende that she wept and syghed sore
Because that she shuld out of the route
Departen, and neuer play with hem more
And they that had knowen her of yore
Se her so wepe, & thought it wos kyndnesse
And eche of hem wepte eke for her distresse

And besily they gonnen her to comforten
One thing god wot, on which she lyked thought
And with her tales wenden her disporten
And to be glad they ofte her besought
But such an ease therwith they her wrought
Right as a man is eased for to fele
For ache of hed, to clawen him on his hele

But after al this nyce banyte
They toke her leue, and home they wenten al
Creseyde ful of sorowful pyte
In to her chambre vp went out of the hall
And on her bedde she gan for deed to fal
In purpose neuer thence for to ryse
And thus she wrought, as I shal you deuyse

Her ownded heer, ꝑ sonnysshe was of hewe
She rent, & eke her fyngers long & smale
She wronge ful ofte, & bade god on her rewe
And with the deth to do bote on her bale
Her hewe whylom bright, that tho was pale
Bare wytnesse of her wo, & her constreynte
And thus she spake, sobbing in her cōpleynte

Clas (qō she) out of this regyoun
I woful wrecche and infortuned wight
And borne in cursed constellacioun
Mote gone, and thus departen fro my knight
Wo worth alas, that like dayes lyght
On which I saw him first wt eyen twayne
That causeth me, & I him al this payne

Therwith the teres from her eyen two
Downe fel, as shoure in Aprill swythe
Her whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the dethe she cryed a thousande sythe
Seus he that wonte her wo was for to lithe
She mote forgon, for whiche disauenture
She helde her selfe a forlost creature

Shee sayd, how shal he done and I also
How shuld I lyue, if I from him twynne
O dere hert ene that I loue so
Who shal that sorow sleen, that ye ben inne
O Calkas father, thyn be al this synne
O mother myn, that clasped were in vrgyue
Wo worth that day, that I me bare on lyue

To what fyne shuld I lyue & sorowen thus
How shuld a fyshe withouten water dure
What is Creseyde worthe from Troylus
How shuld a plante or lyues creature
Lyue withouten his kynde noriture
For which ful ofte, as by word here I sey
That totelesse more grene sone dey

I shal don thus, sens neyther sword ne darte
Dare I none handle, for the cruelte
That like day that I fro you departe
Yf sorowe of that nyl nat my bane be
Than shal no meate ne drinke come in me
Til I my soule out of my brest dryue
And thus my seluen wol I don to dethe

And Troylus, my clothes euerychone
Shul blacke ben, in tokenyng herte sworte
That I am as out of this worlde agone
That wont was you to set in quiete
And of myne order aye, til dethe me mete
The obseruaunce euer in your absence
Shal sorow ben, complaynt, & abstynence

Myne hert, and eke the woful gost therin
Byquethe I with your spirite to complayne
Eternally, for they shal neuer twyn
For thought in erthe twinned be we twayne
Yet in the feld of pyte, out of payne
That hight Elisos, shal we ben yfere
As Orpheus and Eurdice his fere

Thus hert myne, for Antenor alas
I sone shal be chaunged, as I mene
But how shul ye done in this sorowful cas
How shal your tendre herte this sustene
But hert myn, forget this sorow and tene
And me also, for sothly for to sey
So ye wel fare, I recche not to dey

How might it euer redde ben or ysonge
The playnt that she made in her distresse
I not, but as for me my lytel tonge
Yf I discryuen wolde her heynesse
It shulde make her sorowe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Her hie complaynte, & therfore I it pace

Pandare, which that sent from Troylus
Was vnto Creseyde, as ye haue herde deuise
That for the best it was acorded thus
And he ful glad to done him that seruyse
Vnto Creseyde in a ful secrete wise
There as she lay, in turment and in rage
Came her to tel al holly his message

And fonde that she her seluen gan to rente
Ful pytously, for with her salte teres
Her brest and face ybathed was ful wete
Her myghty tresses of her sonnyshe heres
Vnbroyden, hangen al aboute her eres
Which gaue him very sygne of matiere
Of dethe, which that her hert gan dere

Whan she him sawe, she gan for sorowe anon
Her tery face, atwyxt her armes hyde
For which this Pandare is so wo bygon
That in the house he might vneth abyde
As he that felte sorowe on euery syde
For if Creseyde had erste complayned sore
Tho gan she playne a thousande tymes more

And in her aspre playnte, thus she seyde
Pandare, first of loues mo than two
Was cause, causyng vnto me Creseyde
That nowe transmued ben in cruel wo
Whether shal I say to you welcome or no
That alderfirst me broughte vnto servyse
Of loue alas, that endeth in such wyse

Endeth than loue in wo, ye or men lyeth
And al worldly blysse, as thyncth me
The ende of blysse aye sorowe it occupyeth
And who troweth not that it so be
Let him vpon me wofull wrecche se
That my selfe hate, and aye my byrthe curse
Felyng alway, fro wicke I go to worse

Who so me seeth, he seeth sorow al atonis
Payne, turment, playnte, wo, and distresse
Out of my woful body harme there none is
As langour, anguysshe, cruel bytternesse
Annoye, smerte, drede, furye, and eke sickenesse
I trowe ywis from heuen teres rayne
For pyte of my aspre and cruel payne

And thou my suster, ful of discomforte
(Quod Pandarus) what thynke st thou to do
why

Why ne hast thou to thy selven some respite
Why wyte thou thus thy selfe alas for doe
Leave al this werke, and take nowe hede to
That I shall saye, & herken of good entente
This message, þ̄ by me Troylus you sente

Cured her tho Creseyde, a wo makyng
So great, that it a dethe was for to se
Alas (quō she) what wordes may ye bring
What wol my dere herte saye to me
Whiche that I dede neuer more to se
Well he haue playnte or teres er I wende
I haue ynough, if he therafter sende

She was ryght such to sene in her visage
As is that wight that men on bere bynde
Her face lyke of paradys the ymage
Was al ychaunged in another kynde
The play the laugheer, mē were wōt to finde
In her, and ete her ioyes euerychone
Ben fled, and thus lythe Creseyde alone

About her eyen two, a purple ryng
Bytrent, in sothfast tokenyng of her payne
That to beholde it was a dedly thyng
For which Pandare might nat restrayne
The teres from his eyen for to rayne
But natheless as he best might he seyde
From Troylus these wordes to Creseyde

Lo nece, I trowe ye han herde al howe
The kyng with other lordes for the best
Hath made eschaunge of Antenor and you
That cause is of this sorow & this vnrest
But how this case doth Troylus molest
This may none erthly mans tonge say
For bery wo, his wyt is al away

For which we haue so sorowed, he and I
That in to lytel, it had vs both slawe
But thrugh my counsayle this day fynally
He somwhat is fro wepyng withdrawe
And semeth me that he desyreth fawe
With you to ben al nyght for to deuyse
Remedy of this, if there were any wyse

This shorte & playne, the effecte of my message
As ferforth as my wyt can comprehende
For ye that ben of turment in such rage
Wil tono longe prologe as nowe entende
And herupon ye may answere him sende
And for the loue of god my nece dere
So leaue this wo or Troylus be here

Great is my wo (quō she) and syghed sore
As she that feleth deedly sharpe distresse
But yet to me his sorowe is mokel more
That loue him der than he him selfe I gesse
Alas, for me hath he suche heuynesse
Can he for me so pitously complayne
Iwis this sorow doubleth al my payne

Greuous to me god wot is for to twynne
(Quō she) but yet it harder is to me
To sene that sorowe, which that he is inne
For wel wot I, it wol my bane be
And dye I wol in certayne tho (quō she)
But byd hī come, er deth þ̄ thus me threteth
Out of my throte out þ̄ gost, which in myn herte beteth

These wordes sayd, she on her armes two
Fyl grufle, and gan to wepen pitously
(Quō Pandarus) alas why do ye so
Sens ye wel wote the tyme is fast by
That he shal come, aryse vp hastely
That he you nat by wopen thus ne fynde
But ye wol haue him wode out of his mynde

For wysse he that ye farde in this manere
He wolde him selfe slee: and if I wende
To haue this fare, he shuld not come here
For al the good that Troiam may dispende
For to what fyne he wold anon pretende
That know I wel, and for thy yet I sey
So leaue this sorowe, or playnly he wol dey

And shapeth you his sorowe for to abredge
And nat encrease, lefe nece I wete
Bethe rather to him cause of plat than edge
And with some wisdom, ye his sorowes bete
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete
Or though ye both in salte teres dreynte
Wel is a tyme of cure aye than of pleynte

I meane thus, whan I him hyther bringe
Sens ye be wise, and bothe of one assent
So shapeth howe to distourbe your goynge
Or come ayen sone after ye be went
Women ben wise, in shorte auysement
And let sene how your wyt shal auayle
And what þ̄ I may helpe, it shal nat fayle

Go (quō Creseyde) and vncle trewly
I shall done al my might me to restrayne
From wepyng in his syght, and besily
Him for to glad, I shal done al my payne
And in my herte seken euery bayne

Yf to this lore there may ben founden fawe
It shal nat lacke ceretayne on myne halfe

Goth Pandarus, and Troylus he sought
Tyl in a temple he founde hem al alone
As he that of his lyfe no lenger rought
But to the pytouse goddes everychone
Ful tendrely he prayed, and made his mone
To done him sone out of this worlde to pace
For wel he thought ther was non other grace

And shortely al the sothe for to seye
He was so fallen in dispayre that day
That vtterly he shope him for to deye
For right thus was his argument alway
He sayd he nas but lorne welaway
For al that cometh, cometh by necessyte
Thus to ben lorne it is my destyne

For certaynly this wote I wel he sayde
That foresyght of diuine purueyaunce
Had sene alway me to forgon Creseyde
Syns god seeth euery thing out of doutaūce
And hem disposeth through his ordynaunce
In his merites sothly for to be
As they shul comen by predestyne

But natheless alas, whom shal I leue
For there ben great clerkes many one
That destynie, through argumentes preue
And some sayne that nedely there is none
But that fre choyce is yeuen vs euery chone
O welaway, so sygh arne clerkes olde
That I not whose opinion I may holde

For some men saine, þ god seeth al byforne
Ne god may not disceyued ben parde
Thā mote it falle, though men had it sworne
That purueyaunce hath sene beforne to be
Wherfore I say, that from eterne if he
Hath wist beforn our thought eke as our dede
We haue no free choice, as these clerkes rede

For other thought, nor other dede also
Might neuer ben, but suche as purueyaunce
Which may nat ben disceyued neuer mo
Hath feled byforne, withouten ignorance
For if there might ben a varyaunce
To wythen out fro goddes purueyeng
There were no prescience of thing cōmyng

But it were rather an opinion
Uncertayne, and no stedfast forseyng

And certes that were an abusyon
That god shuld haue no parfyte clere weteyng
More than we men, þ haue dourous wening
But suche an errour vpon god to gesse
Were falle and foule, and wicked curiosite

Eke this is an opinyon of some
That haue her coppe ful high & smoth plone
They sayne right thus, þ thing is not to come
For that the prescience hath sene before
That it shal come, but they sayne þ therfore
That it shal come, therfore the purueyaunce
Wote it before withouten ignorance

And in this maner this necessyte
Retourneth in his parte contrary agayne
For nedefully behoueth it nat to be
That thilke thynges fallen in certayne
that bē purueyed, but nedefully as they sayne
Behoueth it that thynges which that fall
That they in certayne ben purueyed al

I meane as though I laboured me in this
to enquire which thig cause of which thig be
As whether that the prescience of god is
The certayne cause of the necessyte
Of thinges that to comen be parde
Or if necessyte of thyng comyng
Be cause certayne of the purueyeng

But nowe ne enforce I me not in shewyng
How þ order of þ causes stāt, but wel wot I
That it behoueth that the befallyng
Of thinges wiste before certaynly
Be necessarye, al seme it not therby
That prescience put fallyng necessayre
To thyng to come, al fal it foule or fayre

For if there syt a man yonde on a se
That by necessyte behoueth it
That certes thyne opinyon sothe be
That weneth or conceyueth that he syt
And further ouer, nowe ayenward yet
Lo, right so is it on the parte contrarye
As thus, nowe herken for I wol nat tarye

I say that if the opinion of the
Be sothe for that he syt, than say I this
That he mote syten by necessite
And thus necessite in eyther is
For in him nede of syttyng is ywis
And in the nede of sothe, and thus forsothe
There mote necessyte ben in you bothe

But

but thou mayst sayne ꝑ man sit nat therfore
That thyn opinyon of hys sittyng soth is
But rather for the man sate there before
Therfore is thyn opinyon soothe ywis
And I say, though the cause of sothe of this
Cometh of hys syttyng, yet necessitie
Is nat therchaunged, bothe in hym and in the

Thus in the same wyse out of doutaunce
I may wel maken, as it semeth me
Thy reasonyng of goddes purueyaunce
And of the thynges that to comen be
By whiche reson men may wel yse
That thylke thynges that in erthe fal
That by necessitie they comen al

For al though that forthyng shal come ywis
Therfore is it purueyed certaynly
Nat that it cometh for it purueyed is
Yet natheless behoueth it nedefully
That thing to come be purueyed trewly
Or els thynges that purueyed be
That they betyden by necessytie

And this sufficeth right ynough certayne
For to distroye our free choyse euerydell
But now we is this abusyon to sayne
That fallyng of the thynges temporell
Is cause of the goddes prescience eternell
Nowe trewly that is a false sentence
That thing to come shuld cause his prescience

What might I wene ꝑ I had such a thought
But that god purueyeth thing ꝑ is to come
For that it is to come, and els nought
So might I wene that thinges al ꝑ some
That wyllom ben byfal and ouercome
Ben cause of thylke souerayne purueyaunce
That forwote al, withouten ignoraunce

And ouer al this, yet say I more therto
That right as whan I wote there is a thing
I wis that thyng mote nedefully be so
Ek right so, whan I wote a thyng coming
So more it come, and thus they befallyng
Of thynges that ben wyste before the tyde
They mowe not ben eschewed on no syde

Than sayd he thus, almighty Ioue in trone
That wotest of al this thing ꝑ sothfastnesse
Rewe on my sorowe, and do me hyen sone
Or bring Creseyde ꝑ me fro this distresse
And while he was in al thys heynesse
Disputing with hym selfe in thys matere
Came pandare in, ꝑ sayde as ye may here

O mighty god (qd pandarus) in trone
Eygh, who sawe euer a wyse man farre so
As thy Troylus, what thynkest thou to done
Hastē thou suche lust to ben thyn owne foe
What parde, yet is nat Creseyde ago
Why lyst the so thy selfe fordon for drede
That in thyn heed, thyn eyen semen dede

Hast thou nat lyued many a yere before
Withouten her and farde ful wel at ease
Art thou for her and for none other bore
Hath kinde the wrought al only her to please
Let be and thynke right thus in thy disease
That in ꝑ dyre, right as therefallen chaūces
Right so in loue ther come ꝑ gon plesaunces

And yet thys is a wonder most of al
Why ꝑ thus sorowest seth thou wost nat yet
Touchyng her goyng, how that it shal fal
Ne if she can her selfe dishourben it
Thou hast nat yet assayed al her wit
I man may al betyme hys neche bede
Whan it shal of, and sorowen at the nede

For thy take hede of al that I shal say
I haue with her ꝑspoke and longe ybe
So as accorded was betwyxe vs twey
And euermore me thynketh thus, that she
Hath somwhat in her hertes priuite
Wherwith she can, if I shal aryght rede
Disturbe al this, of whiche thou art in drede

For whiche my counsel is, whan it is nyght
Thou to her go, and make of this an ende
And blisful Iuno, through her great might
Shal as (I hope) her grace vnto vs sende
Myne hertē seith certayne she shal nat wende
And for thy put, thyne hertē a whyle in rest
And holde thy purpose, for it is the beste

This Troylus answerde, and sighed sore
Thou sayst right wel, and I wyl do right so
And what hym lyste, he sayd vnto hym more
And whan that it was tyme for to go
Ful priuely him selfe withouten mo
Vnto her came, as he was wont to done
And howe they wrought, I shal you tel sone

Soth is, that when they gonne first to mete
So gan the payne her hertes for to twyste

That neither of hem other myght grete
But hem in armes twoe, and after kysse
The lasse woful of hem bothe nysse
Wher ꝑ he was, ne might a wo̓rde out brig
As I sayde erst, for wo and for sobbynge

The woful teeres that they leten fal
As bitter weren out of teeres kynde
For payne, as is tigne, aloes, or gal
So bitter teers wept nat as I fynde
The woful Myrra, through ꝑ barke a rynde
That in this wo̓rld ther nis so herde an herte
That nold haue rewed on her paynes smerte

But whan her woful werry gostes twayne
Returned ben, ther as hem ought to dwel
And that somwhat to weken gan the payne
By length of playnte, a ebben gan the wel
Of her teeres, and the hert biswel
W broken voice, all horse for thrist Creseyde
To Troylus these yike wo̓rdes seyde

O Joue I dye, and mercy the beseche
Helpe Troylus: a therwithal her face
Upon hys brest she sayd, and loste speche
Her woful spirite from his proper place
Right with ꝑ wo̓rde, a way in poynt to pace
And thus she lyth, with hewes pale a grene
That whilom freshe and fayre was to sene

This Troylus that on her gan beholde
Clepyng her name, and she lay as for deed
Withouten answere, a felt her limmes colde
Her eyen throwen bpwarde to her heed
This sorowful man, can now non other rede
But oft tyme her colde mouthe he kysse
Where him was wo, god a him forbede it wysse

He ryseth hym bp, a long straȝte he her leyde
For signe of lyfe, for aught he can or may
Can he none fynde, in nothing of Creseyde
For whiche his songe ful oft is weiaway
But whan he sawe that specheleste she lay
With sorowful voyce, a hert of diffe al bare
He sayd, how sh̄ was fro this wo̓rlde yfare

So after that he longe had her complayned
Bys hondes wronge, a sayd that was to sey
And with his teeres salt her brestе bersayned
He gan tho teeres wypen of ful dreye
And pytously gan for the soule preye
And sayd, lo̓rde that set art in thy trone
Rewe eke on me, for I shal folowe her sone

She colde was, and without feruence
For aught he wote, for bperte feire he wone
And this was him a pregnaunt argument
That she was fleyn out of this wo̓rld agone
And when he saw there was non other wone
He gan her hymmes bresse, in suche manere
As men don hem that shall ben layde on bere

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte
His swerde anon out of his herth he rwighte
Him selfe to sleen, howe sore that him smerte
So that his soule, her soule folowen might
There as the dome of Minos wold it dighte
Bith loue and cruel fortune it ne wolde
That in this wo̓rlde he lenger lyuen sholde

Than sayd he thus, fulfylde of high disdayne
O cruel Joue, and thou Fortune aduerse
This al and some, that falsely haue ye slayne
Creseyde, and sith ye may do me no werse
Fye on your might and werkes so dyuerse
Thus cowardely ye shul me neuer wynne
There shal no derth me fro my lady twynne

For I this wo̓rld, sith ye haue slain her thus
Wol lete, and folowe her spirit lowe or hye
Shal neuer lover sayne that Troylus
Dare nat for frare with his lady dye
For certayne I wol beare her company
But sithe ye wol nat suffre vs lyuen here
Yet suffreth that our soules ben yfere

And thou cite, in wiche I lyue in wo
And thou Priam, and bretheren al yfere
And thou my mother, farwel for I go
And Atropose make redy thou my bere
And thou Creseyde, o swete herte dere
Receyue nowe my spirite, wolde he sey
With swerde at herte, al redy for to dey

But as god wolde of swough she abrayde
And gan to syghe, and Troylus she cryde
And he answerde, lady myn Creseyde
Lyue ye yet, and let his swerde downe glide
Ye hert myn, that thanked be Cupyde
(Quod she) and therwithal she sore sighte
And he began to glade her as he mighte

Toke her in armes two and kysse her ofte
And her to glad, he dyd al his entent
For whiche her gost, that flykered aye a lofte
Into her woful herte ayen it went
But at the lasse, as shut her eye glent

Hyde,

I ſyde, anon ſhe gan his ſwoꝛde aſpye
Is it lay bare, and gan foꝛ feare crye

And aſked hym, why he had it out dꝛawe
And Troylus anon the cauſe her tolde
And how hiſelfe therth he wolde haue ſlawe
Foꝛ which Creſeyde vpon him gan beholde
And gan him in her armes faſt folde
And ſayde, o mercy god, to which a dede
Alas, howe nyghe we weren bothe dede

Than if I nadde ſpoken, as grace was
Ye wolde haue ſlayn your ſelfe anon (qꝺ ſhe)
Ye doutleſſe: and ſhe anſwerde alas
Foꝛ by that ylke loꝛde that made me
I nolde a ſeꝛlong way on lyue haue be
After your deth, to haue ben croꝛoned quene
Of al ꝓ loude the ſonne on ſhyneth ſhene

But th this ſelue ſwoꝛde, whiche ꝓ here is
My ſelfe I wolde haue ſlayne (qꝺ ſhe) tho
But ho, foꝛ we haue right ynough of this
And let vs ryſe and ſtrayte to bedde go
And there let vs ſpeken of our wo
Foꝛ by that moꝛter, whiche that I ſe bꝛenne
Knowe I ful wel, that day is nat feꝛre henne

Whan they wer in her bedde in armes folde
Nauꝛt was it lyke the nighties here beforne
Foꝛ pꝛeuyſly eche other gan beholde
As they that hadden al her blyſſe yloꝛne
Bewayling aye the day that they were boꝛne
Tyl at the laſt, this ſoꝛowful wiꝛt Creſeyde
To Troylus theſe ylke woꝛdes ſeyde

O hert myn, wel wote ye thys (qꝺ ſhe)
That yf a wight alwaye his wo complayne
And ſeketh nat howe holpen foꝛ to be
It nys but foly, and encreace of payne
And ſens that here aſſembled be we twayne
To fynde bote of wo that we ben in
It were tyme al ſoone to begyn

I am a woman, as ful wel ye wotte
And as I am auyſed ſodaynly
So wol I tel you, whyle it is hotte
Me thynketh thus, that neither ye noꝛ I
Ought halfe thys wo to maken ſkylfull ꝙ
Foꝛ there is art ynough foꝛ to redꝛeſſe
That yet is mille, and ſtern this heuyneſſe

Soth is, the wo the whiche we ben inne
Foꝛ aught I wote, foꝛ nothyng eis is
But foꝛ the cauſe that we ſhulde twynne
Conſidꝛed al, there nis no moꝛe amys
And what is than a remedy vnto thyſe
But that we ſhape vs ſone foꝛ to mete
This al and ſome, my dere hert ſwete

Nowe that I ſhal wel bꝛingen it aboute
To comen ayen, ſone after that I go
Therof am I no maner thyng in doute
Foꝛ dꝛedeleſſe, within a weke oꝛ two
I ſhal ben here, and that it may be ſo
By al ryght, and in woꝛdes fewe
I ſhal you wel an heape of wayes ſhewe

Foꝛ whiche I woll nat maken longe ſermon
Foꝛ tyme yloſte may nat recouered be
But I wol go to my concluſyon
And to the beſte, in aught that I can ſe
And foꝛ the loue of god foꝛgeue it me
If I ſpeke aught ayenſt your herres reſte
Foꝛ trewely I ſpeke it foꝛ the beſte

Makyng alway a pꝛoteſtacyon
That nowe theſe woꝛdes which I ſhal ſay
Nys but to ſhewe you my meeyon
To fynde vnto our helpe the beſte way
And take it none otherwyſe I pꝛay
Foꝛ in effecte, what ſo ye me cõmaunde
That wol I done, foꝛ that is no demaunde

Now herkeneth this, ye haue wel vnderſtõd
My goyng graunted is by parlyment
So ferforth ꝓ it may not ben withſtonde
Foꝛ al thys woꝛlde, as by my iugement
And ſithe there helpeth none amyſement
To letten it, lette it paſſe out of mynde
And let vs ſhape a better way to fynde

The ſothe is, the twynnyng of vs twayne
Wol vs diſeaſe, and cruelly anoye
But him behoueth ſomtyme haue a payne
That ſeruetly loue, if that he wol haue ioye
And ſith I ſhal no farther out of Troye
Than I may ryde ayen on halfe a moꝛowe
It ought laſſe cauſen vs foꝛ to ſoꝛowe

So as I ſhal nat ſo bren hyd in mewe
That day by day, myn owne herte dere
Sens wel ye wote that it is nowe a tꝛewe
Ye ſhal ful wel al myn eſtate here
And er that truce is done, I ſhal ben here
Than haue ye bothe Antenoꝛ ywonne
And me alſo, berthe glad nowe if ye conne

And

And thinke right thus, Creseyde is now ago
But what, she shal come hastely ayen
And whan alas, by god, to ryght anon
Er dayes ten, this dare I saufely sayne
And than at erste, shal we be so fayne
So as we shal togythers euer dwel
That al this wo3lde ne might our blisse tel

I se that oft tyme, there as we ben nowe
That for the beste, our counsayle for to hyde
Ye speke nat with me, nor I with you
In fourteny3t, ne se you gone ryde
May ye nat ten dayes than abyde
For myn honour, in suche auenture
I wys ye mowe or els lyte endure

Ye knowe eke howe that al my kyn is here
But if that onely it my father be
And eke myn other thynges al yfere
And namely my dere herte ye
Whom that I nolde leauen for to se
For al this wo3lde, as wyde as it hath space
Or els se I neuer Ioues face

Why trowe ye my father in thys wyse
Coueyteth so to se me, but for drede
Leste in this towne that folkes me dispyse
Bycause of hym, for hys vnhappy dede
What wote my father what lyfe that I lede
For if he wist in Troye how wel I fare
Vs neded for my wendyng nat to care

Ye, that euery day eke more and more
Men trate of peace, and it supposed is
That men the quene Helenye shal restore
And grekes vs restore that is mys
Though there were comfort none but this
That men purposen peace on euery syde
Ye may the better at ease of herte abyde

For if that it be peace, myn herte dere
The nature of the peace wote nedes dryue
That men muste entrecomune yfere
And to and fro eke ryde and gone as blyue
Al day as thicke as been flyen from an hyue
And euery wight haue lyberty to bleue
Where as hym lyst, the bet withouten leue

And though so be þ peace ther may ben none
Yet hyther, though ther neuer peace ne were
I must come, for whyder shulde I gone
Or howe mischaunce shulde I dwel there
Amonge tho men of armes euer in fere
For whiche, as wysely god my soule rede
I can nat seue wher of ye shulde drede

Haue here another way, if it so be
That al this thing ne may you not suffyce
My father as ye knowen wel parde
Is olde, and eke ful of coueityse
And I right nowe haue founden al the gyse
Without en nede, wherwith I shal hym bete
And herkyneth nowe, if that ye wol assente

Lo Troylus, men fayne that ful herde is
The wolfe ful, and the wedder hole to haue
This is to fayne, that men ful ofte gwis
Mote spenden parte, the remnaunt for to saue
For aye with gelde, men may the herte graue
Of him that set is vpon coueityse
And howe I meane, I shal it you deuyse

The moueable, whiche þ I haue in this town
Vnto my father shal I take, and saye
That right for trouthe, and for saluacion
It sent is, from a frende of his or twaye
The whiche frendes frequently him praye
To sende after more, and that in hye
While that this town stant thus in ieopardye

And that shalbe of golde an huge quantyte
Thus shal I sayn, but leste folke it aspyde
This ma[illegible]e sent by no wight but by me
I shal eke shewen hym, if peace betyde
What frendes that I haue on euery syde
Towarde the courte, to don the more3 past
Of Priamus, and do hym stonde in grace

So what for o thyng and for other swete
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes
That right in heuen his soule is, shal he mete
For al Apollo, or his clerkes lawes
Or calculyng, auaylen nat thre hawes
Desire of golde shal so his soule blende
That as me lyste, I shal wel make an ende

And if he wolde aught by his fort it preue
If that I lye, in certayne I shal fonde
Disturben hym, and plucke by the sleue
Making hys sorte, & beaten him on honde
He hath nat wel the goddes vnderstonde
For goddes speke in amphibologies
And for o sothe, they tellen twenty lyes

Eke drede fonde first goddes, I suppose
Thus shal I sayne, & that his cowarde herte
Made

Made hym amys the goddes text to glose
Whan he forferde out of Delphos sterte
And but I make hym sone to conuerte
And done my rede, within a day or twey
I wol to you oblige me to dey

And trewely, as written wel I fynde
That al this thing was sayd of good entent
And that her hert trewe was and kynde
Towardes him, and spake right as she ment
And þ she starke for wo nighe when she went
And was in purpose euer to be trewe
Thus writen they, þat her werkes knewe

Thys Troylus, with hert and eeres spradd
Herde al this thyng deuysed to and fro
And verily it semed that he had
The selue witte, but yet to let her go
Hys hert misyaue hym euermo
But fynally he gan hys herte wreste
To trusten her, and take it for the beste

For whiche the great fury of his penaunce
Was queynt wt hope, & therwith he bitwene
Began for ioy the amorous daunce
And as the birdes, when the sonne shene
Deliten in her songe, in leues grene
Right so the wordes, that they spake yfere
Deliten hem, and made her hertes clere

But natheleesse, the wendyng of Creseyde
For al this worlde may nat out of his minde
For whiche ful oft he petously her preyde
That of her heste he might her trewe fynde
And sayde her, certes if ye be kynde
And but ye come at day set in Troye
Me shal I neuer haue heale, honor, ne ioye

For al so sothe as sonne bryst to morowe
And god so wysely thou me wofull wretche
To rest brynge, out of this cruel sorowe
I wol my seluen slee, if that ye stretche
But of my dethe though lytel be to retche
Yet er that ye me causen so to smerte
Dwel rather here my owne swete herte

For trewely myn owne lady dere
The sleightes yet, that I haue herd you stere
Ful shapely ben to fallen al yfere
For thus men sayth, þ one thinketh the bere
But al another thynketh the ledere
Your fire is wise, and sayd is out of drede
Men may the wyse out renne, & nat out rede

It is ful harde to halten vn espyed
Before a creppl, for he can the crafte
Your father is in sleight as Argus eyed
For al be it that his monable is hym bynafte
Hys olde sleight is yet so with him lafte
Ye shal nat blende him for your womanhede
Ne fayne aright, and that is al my drede

I not if peace shal euermo betyde
But peace or no, for erneſt ne for game
I wote sith Calcas on the grekes syde
Hath ones ben, and lost so foule hys name
He dare no more come here ayen for shame
For whiche that we, for ought I can espy
To trusten on, nys but a fantasye

Ye shal eke seen your father shal you glose
To ben a wyfe, and as he can wel preche
He shal some greke so preyse and wel alose
That rauyshen he shal you with his speche
Or do you done by force, as he shal reche
And Troylus on whom ye nyl haue routh
Shal causeleſſe so steruen in his trouth

And ouer al this your father shal dispyce
Vs al, and sayne this cite nys but lorne
And that thassege neuer shal aryse
For why the grekes haue it al sworne
Tyl we ben slayne, & down our walles torne
And thus he shal you with his wordes fere
That aye drede I, that ye wol bleuen there

Ye shal eke sene so many a lusty knyght
Amonge the grekes ful of worthyneſſe
And eche of hem, with herte, wit, & myght
To pleasen you, done al hys busyneſſe
That ye shul dullen of the endeneſſe
Of sely Troyans, but yf routhe
Remorde you, or bertue of your trouthe

And this to me so grenouse is to thynke
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende
Ne dredeleſſe, in me there may nat synke
O good opinyon, if that ye wende
For why, your fathers sleight wol vs shende
And if ye gone, as I haue tolde you yore
So thinke I nam but deed, withouten more

For which with humble, true & pitous hert
A thousande tymes mercye I you pray
So reweth on myn aspre paynes smerte
And doth somwhat, as that I shal you saye
And let vs steale away betwixt vs tway

And

And thinke ꝑ folye is, whan a man maye chese
Foꝛ accident, his substaunce foꝛ to lese

I meane thus, that sens we mowe oꝛ daye
Wel stealle away, and ben togyther so
What wyt were it to putten in assaye
(In ease ye shulden to your father go)
If that ye mighten come ayen oꝛ no
Thus meane I, that were a great folye
To put that sykernesse in ieopardye

And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of treasour may we bothe with vs lede
Ynough to lyue in honour and pleasaunce
Tyl vnto tyme that we shal ben dede
And thus we may eschewen al this drede
Foꝛ euery other way ye can recoꝛde
Myn hert ywis may therwith nat acoꝛde

And hardely ne dredeth no pouerte
Foꝛ I haue kyn and frendes eis where
That though we comen in our bare shette
Vs shulde neuer lacke golde ne grete
But ben honoured whyle we dwelten there
And go we anone, foꝛ as in myn entent
This is the beste, if that ye wol assent

Creseyde, with a syghe, right in thys wyse
Answerde: ywis my dere herte trewe
We may wel stealle away, as ye deuyse
And fynden suche vnthrifty wayes newe
But afterwarde ful soꝛe it wol vs rewe
And helpe me god so at my moste nede
As causelesse ye suffren al thys drede

Foꝛ thylke day that I foꝛ cherysshyng
Oꝛ drede of father, oꝛ foꝛ any other wight
Oꝛ foꝛ estate, delyte, oꝛ foꝛ wedyng
Be false to you, my Troylus my knyght
Saturnus douzter Juno, thꝛough her mizt
As woode as Athamante do me dwel
Eternally with Stix in the pyt of hel

And this, on euery god celestyal
I sweare it you, and eke on eche goddesse
On euery nymphe, and deite infernal
On Satiry and faunyn moꝛe and lesse
That halue goddes ben of wildernesse
And Attropos my thꝛede of lyf to dreste
If I be false, nowe trowe me ꝑf you leste

And thou Mynoys, that as an arowe cleꝛe
Thꝛouz Troy rennest, ay downward to ꝑ see
Be witnesse of this woꝛde, that sayd is here
That thylke day that I vntrewe be
To Troylus, myn owne herte fre
That thou returne backewarde to thy well
And I with body and soule synke to hel

But that ye speke away thus foꝛ to go
And letten al your frendes, god foꝛbede
Foꝛ any woman that ye shulden so
And namely sens Troy hath now such nede
Of helpe, and eke of o thyng taketh hede
If this were wist, my lyfe lay in balaunce
And your honoꝛ, god shilde vs fro mischaunce

And if so be that peace hereafter be take
As al day happeth after angre game
Why lozde the sozow & wo ye wolden make
That ye ne durst come ayen foꝛ shame
And er that ye ieoparden so your name
Beth nat to hasty in this hotte fare
Foꝛ hasty man ne wanneth neuer care

What trowe ye the people eke al aboute
Wolde of it sayen is ful lyght to arede
They wolden say, and swerre it out of doute
That loue ne drawe you nat to don this dede
But lust voluptous, and cowarde drede
Thus were al loste ywis myn herte dere
Your honour, whiche that now shyneth clere

And also thynketh on myn honeste
That floureth yet, how foule I shuld it shende
And with what vyth it spotted shulde be
If in this foꝛme I shulde with you wende
Ne though I lyued vnto the woꝛldes ende
Myn name shulde I neuer ayenwarde wynne
Thus were I loste, and ꝑ were routh & synne

And foꝛ thy, flee with reason al this here
Wen sayne the sulfraunt ouercometh parde
Eke who so wol haue lefe, he lefe mote lete
Thus maketh vertue of necessyte
By patience, and thynke that lozde is he
Of foꝛtune aye, that naught wol of her recch
And she me daunteth no wight but a wrecch

And trusteth this, that cercles herte swete
Oꝛ Phebus suster, Lucina the shene
The Lyon passe, out of this Irite
I wol ben here, withouten any wene
I meane, as helpe me Juno heuens quene
The tenth day, but if that derthe me assayle
I wol you sene, without en any fayle

And

And nowe so this be sothe (qō Troylus)
I shal wel suffre vnto the tenthe day
Sens that I se that nede it mote ben thus
But for the loue of god, if it be may
So let vs stealen prively away
For euer in one, as for to lyue in rest
Your herte sayth that it wol be the best

C.

O mercy god, what lyfe is this (qō she)
Alas, ye slee me thus for very tene
I se wel now that ye mystrusten me
For by your wordes it is wel sene
Now for the loue of Scythia the shene
Mistrust me nat thus causeles for routh
Sens to be trew, I haue you plight my trouth

And thynketh wel, that somtyme it is wyt
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to wynne
Ne parde loue am I nat fro you yet
Though that we ben a day or two a twynne
Dryue out tho fantasyes you within
And trusteth me, and leaueth eke your sorow
Or here my trouth, I wol nat liue til morow

For if ye wyste how sore it doth me smerte
Ye wold ersle of this, for god thou wost
The pure spirit wepeth in myne herte
To sene you wepen, which that I loue moste
And that I mote gone vnto the grekes hoste
Ye, nere it that I wyste a remedye
To come ayen, right here I wolde dye

But certes I am not so nyce a wight
That I ne can ymagynen a way
To come ayen that day that I haue hyght
For who may holden a thing ỳ wol away
My father naught, for al his queynte play
And by my thrift, my wendyng out of Troye
Another day shal turne vs al to ioye

For thy with al myne hert I you beseke
If that you lyst done aught for my prayere
And for the loue which that I loue you eke
That er that I departe fro you here
That of so good a comforte and a chere
I may you sene, that ye may bring at rest
Myne herte, which is at poynt to brest

And ouer al this I pray you (qō she) tho
Myne owne herres sothfaste suffysaunce
Sith I am thyne al hole withouten mo
That while ỳ I am absent, no plesaunce
Of other, do me fro your remembraunce
For I am euer agast, for why men rede
That loue is thing aye ful of besy drede

For in this worlde there lyueth lady none
Yf that ye were untrewe, as god defende
That so betrayed were, or wo begone
As I, that al trouthe in you entende
And doutlesse, if that iche other wende
I nere but deed, and er ye cause fynde
For goddes loue, so beth me naught unkynde

To this answered Troylus, and seyde
Now god, to whō there nys no cause ywrye
Me glad, as wys I neuer vnto Cresseyde
Sithe thilke day I sawe her first with eye
Was falle, ne neuer shal tyl that I dye
Be thorter wordes, wel ye maye me leue
I can no more, it shal be founde at preue

Grauntmercy good hert myne ywis (qō she)
And blysful Venus let me neuer sterue
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degre
To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserue
And whyle ỳ god my wyt wyl me conserue
I shal so doue, so trewe I haue you founde
That aye honour to mewarde shal rebounde

For trusteth wel, that youre estate royal
Ne veyne delyte, nor onely worthynesse
Of you in werre or turnay marcyal
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eke richesse
Ne made me to rewe on your distresse
But moral vertue, grounded vpon trouthe
That was ỳ cause I first had on you routhe

Eke gentyl hert, a manhede that ye had
And that ye had (as me thought) in dispyte
Euery thyng that sowned in to bad
As rudenesse, and propyrsthe appetyte
And that your reason bridled your delyte
This made abouen euery creature
That I was yours, & shal while I may dure

And this my length of yeres nat forbo
Ne remuable fortune deface
But Jupiter, that of his might may do
The sorowful to be glad, so yeue vs grace
Er nyghtes ten, to meten in this place
So that it may your hert and myn suffyse
And farewel now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse

And after that they longe yplayned had
And ofte ykyst, and stratte in armes folde

The day gan ryse, and Troylus him clad
And eftsoons his lady gan beholde
As he that felte dethes cares colde
And to her grace he gan him recommaunde
Where he was wo, this hold I no demaunde

For mannes heed ymagynen ne can
Ne entendement conſyder, ne tonge tell
The cruel paynes of this ſorowful man
That paſſen euery turment downe in hell
For whan he ſawe that she ne myght dwell
With which that his ſoule out of his herte rente
Withouten more, out of the chambre he wente.

Explicit li. iii. Et incipit li. iv.

Approchen gan the fatal deſtyne
That Joues hath in diſpoſytioun
And to you angry ſiſtren thre
Commytteth to done execucioun
For which Creſeyde muſt out of the toun
And Troylus shal dwel forthe in pyne
Tyl Lacheſis his threde no lenger twyne

The golde treſſed Phebus hygh on lofte
Thryſe had al with his beames clere
The ſnowes molte, & zephirus as ofte
Ybrought ayen the tendre leaues grene
Sens that the ſonne of Eccuba the quene
Began to love her firſt, for whom his ſorowe
Was al, that she depart ſhuld a morowe

Ful redy was at prime Diomede
Creſeyde vnto to the grekes hoſte to leed
For ſorow of which, she felte her herte blede
As she that nyſt what was beſt to reed
And trewly, as men in bokes reed
Nyen wyſte neuer woman haue the care
He was ſo lothe out of a towne to fare

This Troylus withouten rede or lore
As man that hath his ioyes eke forlore
Was wayteyng on his lady euer more
As she that was ſothfaſt croppe and more
Of al his luſt or ioyes here tofore
But Troylus now farwel al thy ioye
For shalt thou neuer ſene her efte in Troye

Sothe is, that whyle he bode in this manere
He gan his woful manly for to hyde
That wel vneth it ſene was in his chere
But at the yate there she ſhulde out ryde
With ſertayne folke he houed her to abyde
And wo bygon, al wolde he not him playne
That on his horſe vneth he ſate for payne

For ire he quoke, ſo gan his herte gnawe
Whan Diomede on horſe gan him dyght
And ſayd vnto him ſelfe this yike ſawe
Alas (quod he) thus foule a wretch dyde eſt
Why ſuffre I it, why nyl I it redreſſe
Were it nat her ataches for to dye
Than euermore in langour thus to drye

Why nyl I make at once an ende and pore
To haue ynough to done et that she go
Why nyl I bringe al Troye vpon a roore
Why nyl I ſlen this Diomede alſo
Why nyl I gather with a man or two
Steale her away, why wol I this endure
Why nyl I helpen to myne owne cure

But why he nolde doue ſo fel a dede
That shal I ſayne, & why him lyſt it ſpare
He had in herte alway a maner drede
Leſt that Creſeyde, in rumour of this fare
Shuld haue be ſlayn, ſo this was all his care
And eke certayne, as I ſayd yore
He had it done, withouten wordes more

Creſeyde whan she redy was to ryde
Ful ſorowfully she ſyghed, and ſayd alas
But forth she more, for aught ꝑ may betyde
And forth she ryderh ful ſorowfully a paas
There is none other remedye in this caas
What wonder is, though that her ſore ſmerte
Whan she forgoth her own ſwete herte

This Troylus in gyſe of curteſye
With hauke on honde, & with an huge route
Of knyghtes, rode and did her compayne
Halfynge al the baley, ferre without
And ferther wolde haue rydden out of doute
Ful fayne, and wo was him to gon ſo ſone
But curne he muſte, and it was eke to done

And right with that was Antenor proune
Out of the grekes hoſte, and euery wight
Was of him glad, & ſayd he was welcome
And Troylus, al nere his herte lyght
He payned him, with al his ful myght
Him to with holde of weeping at leſte
And Antenor he kyſte, and made feſte

And therwithal he muſt his leaue take
And caſt his eye vpon her proudly
And nere he rode, his cauſe for to make
To take her by the honde al ſoberly
And lorde ſo she gan wepen tenderly

And

And he ful softe and slyghly gan her sey
Now holde your day, and do me not to dey

Wyth that his courser turned he aboute
With face pale, and vnto Diomede
No worde he spake, ne none of al his route
Of which the sonne of Tideus toke hede
As he was wont, but lyth and lyth he rede
In suche a traunce, and by the rayne her hente
And Troylus to Troye, homwardes wente

This Diomede, that lad her by the bridell
Whan that he saw the folke of Troye away
Thought, al my labour shal not ben on ydell
If that I may, for somwhat shal I say
For at the worst, it shorte may our way
I haue herde say eight rymes twyse twelue
He is a foole that wol forgete him selue

But natheles, this thought he wel ynough
That certainly I am aboute naught
Yf that I spyke of loue, or make it to tought
For doutelesse, if she haue in her thought
Him that I grette, he may not ben vbrought
So sone away, but I shal fynde a meane
That shal not yet were shal what I meane

This Diomede, as he that couthe his gode
Whan this was don, gan fallen forth in spreche
Of this and that, and aske why she wode
In such distresse, and gan her eke beseche
That if that he encreasen might or eche
With any thyng her ease, that she sholde
Comaund it him, and said he don it wolde

For trewly he swore her as a knyght
That ther nas thig, wherwhich he myght her plese
That he nolde don his payne, and all his might
To don it, for to don her hert an ese
And prayde her she wolde her forowe apese
And sayd, ywis we grekes can haue ioye
To honoure you, as wel as folke of Troye

He said eke thus, I wot you thinketh straunge
No wonder is, for it is to you newe
That acquaintaunce of these Troyans to chaunge
For folke of Grece, that ye neuer knewe
But wolde neuer god, but if as trewe
I grete ye shulde amonge vs al fynde
As any Troyan is, and eke as kynde

And by cause I swore you ryght nowe
To ben your frende, and helply to my myght
And for that more acquaintaunce eke of you
Haue I had, than another straunger wyght
So fro this forth, I pray you day and nyght
Comaundeth me, how fore that me smerte
To done, al that may lyke vnto your herte

And that ye me wold, as your brother treate
And taketh not my frendshyp in dispite
And thouz your forowes ben for thiges grete
Not I nat why, but out of more respite
Myn hert hath for to amende it great delyte
And if I may your harmes nat redresse
I am right sory for your heuynesse

For though ye Troyans, vs vs grekes wrothe
Haue many a day ben: alway yet parde
O god of loue, in sothe we seruen bothe
And for the loue of god my lady free
Whom so ye hate, as berthe not wroth vs me
For trewly there can no wight you serue
That halfe so loth your wrath wold deserue

And nere it that we ben so nere the tent
Of Calcas, which that sene vs bothe may
I wolde of this you tel al myne entent
But this enseled tyl another day
Yeue me your honde, I am and shal be aye
God helpe me so, while that my lyfe may dure
Your owne, abouen euery creature

Thus sayd I neuer er nowe to woman borne
For god myne herte as wisely glad so
I loued neuer woman herte before
As paramours, ne neuer shal no mo
And for the loue of god be not my foe
Al can I not to you my lady dere
Complayne aright, for I am yet to lere

And wondreth nought myne own lady bright
Though that I spoke of loue to you thus blyue
For I haue herde or this of many a wight
Hath loued thing he neuer sawe his lyue
Eke I am not of power for to stryue
Ayenst the god of Loue, but him obey
I wol alwaye, and mercy I you prey

There beth so worthy knyghtes in this place
And ye so fayre, that euerythe of hem al
Wol payne him to stonden in your grace
But might me so fayre a grace fal
That ye me for your seruaunt wolde cal
So lowly, ne so trewly you serue
Nyl none of hem, as I shal tyl I sterue

Creseyde vnto that purpose lyte answerde
As she that was vᵗ sorowe oppressed so
That in effecte she naught his tales herde
But here & there, nowe here a worde or two
Her thought her sorowful hert brast a two
For whan she gan her father ferre espye
Wel nyghe downe of her horse she gan to lye

But natheles she thonketh Diomede
Of al his trauayle and his good chere
And that him lyst his frendeshyp to her bede
And she accepteth it in good manere
And wol do fayne that is him lefe and dere
And trusten him she wold, and wel she myght
As sayd she, and from her horse she alyght

Her father hath her in his armes nome
And twenty times he kist his doughter swete
And sayd: o dere doughter myne welcome
She said eke, she was fayne vᵗ him to mete
And stode forthe muet, mylde, and mansuete
But here I leaue her with her father dwell
And forth I wol of Troylus you tel

To Troye is come this woful Troylus
In sorowe abouen al sorowes smerte
With felon loke, and face dispitous
Tho sodaynly down frō his horse he sterte
And through his paleys with swoine herte
To chambre he went, of nothing toke he hede
Ne none to him dare speke a worde for drede

And there his sorowes that he spared had
He yaue an issue large, and dethe he cryde
And in his throwes, frenetyke and mad
He curseth Juno, Apollo, and eke Cupide
He curseth Bachus, Ceres, and Citheride
His byrthe, him selfe, his fate, and eke nature
And saue his lady, euery creature

To bed he goth, & weyleth there & turneth
In furye, as doth he Jxion in hell
And in this wyse he nygh eyl day sojourneth
But tho began his hert alyte vnswell
Through teres, which that gonen vp to wel
And pitously he cryed vpon Creseyde
And to him selfe right thus he spake & seyde

Where is myne owne lady lefe and dere
Where is her white brest, where is it where
Where ben her armes, and her eyen clere
That yesterday this tyme with me were
Nowe may I wepe alone many a tere
And graspe aboute I may, but in this place
Saue a pyllowe, I fynde naught to embrace

How shal I don whan shal she come agayne
I not alas, why let I her go
As wold god I had as tho be slayn
O herte myn Creseyde, O swete fo
O lady myne, that I loue and no mo
To whom for euer more myne hert I owe
Se howe I dye, ye nyl me not reskowe

Who seeth you now, my right lode sterre
Who syteth right nowe in your presence
Who can cōforten now yous hertes werre
Now I am gon, whom yeue ye audyence
Who speketh for me right now in your absence
Alas no wight, and that is al my care
For wel wote I, as yuel as I ye fare

How shuld I thus ten dayes full endure
Whan I the first nyght haue al this tene
Howe shal she eke sorowful creature
For tenderneſſe, how shal she this sustene
Suche wo for me, o pytous, paie, & grene
Shal ben your freshe womanly face
For langour er ye turne vnto this place

And whan he syl in any slombrynges
Anon begyn he shuld for to grone
And dreamen of the dredfullest thynges
That myght ben, as mete he were alone
In place horrydie, makyng aye his mone
Or meten that he was amonges all
His enemyes, and in her hondes fall

And therwithal his body shulde sterte
And with the starte al sodayny awake
And suche a tremour fele about his herte
That of the feare his body shuld quake
And therwithal he shulde a noyse make
And seme as though he shulde fal depe
From high alofte, and than he wold wepe

And rewen on him selfe so pitously
That wonder was to here his fantasye
Another tyme he shulde mightely
Comforte him selfe, and sayne it was folye
So causeleſſe, such drede for to dye
And eft begyn his sorowes newe
That euery man might on his paynes rewe

Who couldē tel al, or fully discryue
His wo, his playnt, his langour, & his pyne

Lat al the men that han or ben on lyue
Thou redest wayst thy selfe ful wel deuyne
That such a wo my wyt can not defyne
Or ydel for to write it shulde I swynke
Whan that my wyt is wery it to thynke

Or heuen yet the sterres weren sene
Through ful pale swoxen was the moone
And whyten gan the orisonte shene
Al est warde, as it is wonte to doone
And phebus with his rosy carte soone
Gan after that to dresse him vp to fare
Whan Troylus hath sent after Pandare

This Pandare, that of al the day before
Ne might him comen this Troylus rose
Al though he on his bed it had swore
For with the kyng Priam alday was he
So that it lay nat in his liberte
Nowhere to gon, but on the morow he went
To Troylus, whan that he for him sent

For in his herte he coulde wel deuyne
That Troylus al nyght for sorowe woke
And that he wolde tel him of his pyne
This knewe he wel ynough without boke
For which to chambre streight ꝑ waye he toke
And Troylus tho soberly he grette
And on the bed ful sone he gan him sette

My Pandarus (qꝺ Troylus) the sorowe
Whiche that I dye, I may not long endure
I trowe I shal not lyuen yl to morowe
For which I wold al wayes en auenture
To the deuysen of my sepulture
The forme, and of my mouable thou dispone
Right as the semeth best is for to done

But of the fyre and flambe funerall
In which my body brennen shal to giede
And of the feest and playes palestrall
At my vigyle, I pray the take good hede
That ꝑ be well, and offre Mars my stede
My swerde, myne helme, & leue brother dere
My sheld eke Pallas yeue, that shyneth clere

The poudre, I which min herte ybrede shal turn
That pray I the thou take, and it conserue
In a vessel that men clepeth an vrne
Of golde, and to my lady that I serue
For loue of whom thus pytously I sterue
So yeue it her, and do me this plesaunce
To prayen her to kepe it for a remembraunce

For wel I sele by my maladye
And by my dreames, nowe and yore ago
Al certaynly, that I more nedes dye
The oule eke, whiche that hyght Ascaphylo
Hath after me shright al these nightes two
And god Mercury, now of me wofol wretche
The soule gyde, and whan the lyst it feeche

Pandare answerde, and sayd Troylus
My dere frende, as I haue tolde the yore
That it is folye for to sorowen thus
And causeleesse, for whiche I can no more
But who so wol not trowen rede ne lore
I can not sene in him no remedye
But let him worchen with his fantasye

But Troylus I pray the tel me nowe
Yf that thou trowe er this that any wight
Hath loued paramours as wel as thou
Ye god wot, and fro many a worthy knyght
Hath his lady gon a fourtenyght
And he nat yet made halwendele the fare
What nede is the to maken al this care

Sens day by day thou mayst thy selfen se
That from his loue, or els from his wyfe
A man mote twynnen of necessyte
Ye, though he loue her as his owne lyfe
Yet nyl he with him selfe thus maken stryfe
For wel thou woste my leue brother dere
That alway frendes may not ben yfere

How don this folke, ꝑ sene her loues wedded
By frendes might as it betydeth ful ofte
And sene hem in her spouses bed ybedded
God wote they take it wisely fayre and softe
For why, good hope halt vp her herte a lofte
And for they can a tyme of sorowe endure
As tyme hem hurteth, a tyme doth hem cure

So shuldest thou endure, and letten slyde
The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and lyght
Ten dayes nys not so longe to abyde
And sens she to comen the hath behyght
She nyl her hest breken for no wyght
For dede the not, that she nyl fynde way
To come ayen, my lyfe that durst I lay

Thy sweuenes eke, and al suche fantasye
Dryue out, and let hem fare to mischaunce
For they procede of thy melancolye
That doth the fele in slepe al this penaunce
I strawe for al sweuenes sygnyfiaunce

God helpe me so, I counte hem not a beene
There wot no man what dremes meene

For prestes of the temple tellen this
That dremes ben the revelations
Of goddes, and als wel they tell ywis
That they ben infernalles illusyons
And leches sayne, that of complections
Proceden they of fast, or glotonye
Who wot in sothe thus what they signifye

Eke other sayne, that through impressions
As if a wight hath fast a thing in mynde
That therof cometh suche avysions
And other sayne, as they in bokes fynde
That afret tymes of the yere by kynde
Men dreame, and ȝ theffect goth by ȝ moone
But leve no dreame, for it is nat to doone

Wel worth of dremes aye these olde wyves
And trewely eke, augurye of these fooles
For fere of whiche, men wenen lese her lives
As raukes qualm, or schriching of these owles
To trowen on it, bothe false and foule is
Alas alas, that so noble a creature
As is a man, shuld drede suche ordure

For which with al myne herte I the beseche
Unto thy selfe, that al this thou forvete
And rise now up, withouten more speche
And let us cast how forth may best be dryven
The tyme, & eke how freshly we may lyven
When she cometh, ȝ which shal be right sone
God helpe me so, the best is thus to done

Rise, let us speke of lusty lyfe in Troye
That we have lad, and forth the tyme dryve
And eke of tyme comyng us tvoye
That dringen shal our blysse nowe so blyve
And langour of these twyse dayes fyve
We shal therwith so forvet or oppresse
That wel vnneth it done shal us duresse

This towne is ful of lordes al aboute
And trewe lasten al this meane while
So we playen us in some lusty route
To Sarpedon, not hewe but a myle
And thus thou shalt the tyme wel begyle
And dryve it forth, unto that blysful morowe
That thou her se, ȝ cause is of thy sorowe

Nowe rise my dere brother Troylus
For every it non honour is to the
To wepe, and in thy bed to rouken thus
For trewely of a thyng trust to me
Yf thou thus lygge, a day, two or three
The folke wol wene, that ȝ for cowardyse
The kynges speke, & that ȝ darst not rise

This Troylus answerde: o brother dere
This folke knowe that have yfostred myne
That thou he wepe, & make sorowful chere
That frieth harme & smert in every bayne
No wonder is, and though I ever playne
Or alway wepe, I am not thyng to blame
Sens ȝ I have lost, ȝ cause of al my game

But sens of thyne force I more aryse
I shal aryse, as sone as ever I may
And god, to whom myne herte I sacrifyse
So sende us hastely the rewthe day
For was there never foule so fayne of May
As I shal ben, whan that she cometh in Troy
That cause is of my ferthere and my joy

But whider is thy rede (qd Troylus)
That we may play us best in al this rom
By god my counsayle is (qd Pandarus)
To ryde and play us with kyng Sarpedon
So longe of this they spoken up and down
Tyl Troylus gan at the last assente
To ryse, & forth to Sarpedon they wente

This Sarpedon, as he that honourable
Was ever his lyve, and ful of bye prowesse
With al that might pleasen hem on table
That devyse was, al coste it great richesse
He fedde hem day by day, that such noblesse
As fayden bothe the moste and eke the lest
Was never er that day wyde at any fest

For in this worlde there is none instrument
Delycious, through wynd or touche on corde
As ferre as any wight hath ever ywent
That tonge tell, or hert may recorde
But at that fest, it was well herde recorde
Al of ladyes eke so fayre a compayne
On dawnce er tho, was never ysene with eye

But what avayleth this to Troylus
That for his sorowe, nothyng of it roughte
But ever in one, as hert prytons
Ful bysily Creseyde his lady soughte
On her was ever al that his hert thoughte
Now this now that, so fast ymagynyng
That glad twys can him no felyng

Thes

Theſe ladyes ryde, that at this freſh bem
Sens that he ſawe hys lady was awey
Jt was hys ſorowe vpon hem for to ſeen
Jf for to here on inſtrumentes play
For he that of his herte hath the key
Was abſent, ſo this was his fantaſye
That no wyght ſholde maken melodye.

For there was hour in al the day ne nyght
When he was there as no man myght him here
That he ne ſayd, o louelsome lady bryght
Howe haue ye faren ſens that ye were there
Jn eleome vwis myn owne lady dere
But welaway, al this was but a maſe
Fortune his houe, entended her to glaſe

The letters ehe, that ſhe of olde tyme
Had him ſent, he wolde alone rede
An hundred ſythe, at wyndowe noone and pryme
Refigurynge her ſhappe, & her womanhede
Within his herte, and euery worde and dede
That paſſed was, & thus he droue to an ende
The fourth day, and ſayd he wol wende

And ſayd leue brother Pandarus
Jntendeſt thou that we ſhal here bleue
Til Sarpedon wol forth conueyen vs
Yet were it fayrer that we toke oure leue
For goddes loue, let vs now ſone at eue
Our leaue take, & homwarde let vs tume
For trewely Jl nat thus ſolourne

Pandare anſwerde, be we comen hyther
To fruſhen fyre, and rennen home agayne
God helpe me ſo, Jl can nat telleu whyther
We myght gone, if Jl ſhal forthy layne
There any wight is of vs more fayne
Than Sarpedon, and if we hence hye
Thus ſodaynly, Jl holde it vylanye

Whan that we ſayden we wolde bleue
With him a weke, and nowe thus ſodaynly
The fourth day to take of hym our leue
He wolde wondren on it trewely
Let vs holden forth our purpoſe fermely
And ſens that ye behyghten him to abyde
Holde forwarde nowe, & after let vs ryde

Thys Pandarus, with al pyne and wo
Made him to dwel, and at the wekes ende
Of Sarpedon they toke her leaue tho
And on her way the ſpeden hem to wende
(Of Troylus) nowe lorde me grace ſende
That Jl may fynde at myn home comyng
Creſeyde comen, & therwith gan he ſyng

Ye hasti wode thought this Pandare
And to hym ſtyle ful ſoftly he ſeyde
God wotte refroyden may this horte fare
Er Calcas ſende Troylus Creſeyde
But natheleſſe he iaped thus and ſeyde
And ſwore vwis, his herte him wel behight
She wolde come, as ſone as euer ſhe might

Whan they vnto the paleys were comen
Of Troylus, they downe of horſe alyght
And to ỹ chambre, her way haue they nomen
And vnto tyme that it gan to nyght
They ſpeken of Creſeyde the lady bryght
And after this, when hem bothe leſte
They ſpede hem fro the ſupper vnto reſt

On morowe, as ſone as day began to clere
This Troylus gan of hys ſlepe to abreyde
And to Pandarus, hys owne brother dere
For loue of god, ful pytouſly he freyde
As go we ſene the paleys of Creſeyde
For ſens we yet may haue no more reſt
So let vs ſeyne her paleys at the leſt

And therwithal his meyne for to blende
Jl cauſe he fonde in towne for to go
And to Creſeydes houſe they gon wene
But wyde this ſely Troylus was wo
Him thought his ſorouful herte braſte a two
For when he ſawe her doores ſperred al
Wel nigh for ſorowe adowne he gan to fal

Therwith when he was ware, & gan beholde
Howe ſhet was euery windowe of the place
As froſt him thought his herte gan to colde
For whiche with chaunged deedly pale face
Withouten worde, he forth by gan to pace
And as god wolde, he gan ſo faſte ryde
That no wight of his countenaunce eſpyde

Than ſayde he thus: O paleys deſolate
O houſe of houſes, whilom beſt yhyght
O paleys empty and diſconſolate
O thou lanterne, of which qurint is the light
O paleys, whilom day ỹ nowe art nyght
Wel oughteſt thou to fal, and Jl to dye
Sens ſhe is went, that wont was vs to gye

O paleys whylom crowne of houſes al
Enlumyned with ſonne of al blyſſe

O ryng, of whiche the rubye is out fal
O cause of wo, that cause hast ben of blisse
Yet sens I may no bet, fayne wolde I hyde
Thy colde bowes, durst I for thys route
And farwel shyne, of whiche the saint is out

Therwith he caste on Pandarus hys eye
With chaunged face, and pitous to beholde
And whan he might his tyme aryght aspye
Ye as he rode, to Pandarus he tolde
Hys newe sorowe, and eke his ioyes olde
So pitously, and with so deed an hewe
That euery wight, myght on his sorowe rewe

Fro thence forth he rydeth vp and downe
And euery thyng came hym to remembraunce
As he rode forthe by the places of the towne
In whiche he whylom had al his pleasaunce
Lo, ponder sawe I myn owne lady daunce
And in that temple with her eyen clere
Me caught first my right lady dere

And ponder haue I herde ful lustely
My dere herte laugh, and ponder play
Sawe I her ones eke ful blisfully
And ponder ones to me gan she say
Nowe good swete, loue me wel I pray
And ponde so goodly gan she me beholde
That to the deth myn herte is to her holde

And at the corner in the ponder houte
Herde I myn alderlieuest lady dere
So womanly, with voyce melodyous
Singen so wel, so goodly and so clere
That in my soule yet me thynketh I here
The blisful sowne, and in that ponder place
My lady first me toke vnto her grace

Than thought he thus, o blisful lorde Cupide
Whan I the processe haue in memorye
How thou me hast werryed on euery syde
Me myght a boke make of it lyke a storye
What nede is the to seke on me victorye
Sens I am thyn, and holly at thy wyl
What ioy hast thou thyn owne folke to spyl

Wel hast thou lorde ywroke on me thyn yre
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greue
Nowe mercy lorde, thou woste wel I desyre
Thy grace moste, of al lustes leue
And lyue and dye I wol in thy beleue
For whiche I ne aske in guerdon but a bone
That thou Creseyde ayen me sende sone

Dispatche hyrherre as fast to returne
As thou doest myn to longen her to se
Than wote I wel that she nyl nat sojourne
Nowe blisful lorde, so cruel thounne be
Vnto the blode of Troye, I pray the
As Juno was vnto the blode Thebane
For which the folke of Thebes cauzt her bane

And after this he to the yates wente
Ther as Creseyde out rode, a ful good pas
And vp and down there made he many a wente
And to hym self ful ofte he sayd alas
Fro hence rode my blisse and my solas
As wolde blisful god nowe for his ioye
I might her sene ayen come to Troye

And to the yonder hyl I gan her gyde
Alas, and there I toke of her my leue
And yonde I sawe her to her fader ryde
For sorowe of whiche myn herte shal to cleue
And hyther home I come whan it was eue
And here I dwel, out caste from al ioye
And shal, tyl I may sene her efte in Troye

And of hym self ymagyned he ofte
To ben defayed, pale, and wo begon
Than he was wont, & that men saiden softe
What may it be? who can the sothe gesse
Why Troylus hath al this heuynesse
And al this was but hys melancolye
That he had of him self suche fantasye

Another tyme ymagyned he wolde
That euery wight that went by the way
Had of hym routhe, & that they sayne sholde
I am right sory, Troylus wel dey
And thus he drou a day per forth or tweye
As ye haue herde, suche lyfe gan he lede
As he that stode betwixen hope and drede

For which him lyked in his songes shewe
Therchesoun of his wo, as he best myght
And made a songe, of wordes but a fewe
Somwhat his wofal herte for to lyght
And when he was from euery mannes sight
With sobre voyce, he of hys lady dere
That absent was, gan sing as ye may here

O sterre, of whiche I lost haue al the lyght
With herte sore, wel ought I to bewayle
That euer derke in turment, myght by nyght
Towarde my derthe, vb wayte I sterre & fayle
For whiche the tenth night, if that I fayle

The

The gydyng of thy bemes bryght an houre
My herp and me Carybdes wol deuoure

This longe when he thus longen had fone
He fyl ayen in to his sighes olde
And euery night, as was hys wont to doone
He stode the bright moone to beholde
And al his sorowe he to the moone tolde
And sayd, ywis whan thou art horned newe
I shal be glad, if al the worlde be trewe

I sawe thyn hornes olde eke by ỳ morowe
Whan hence rode my right lady dere
That cause is of my turmẽt and my sorowe
For whiche, o bright Lucina the clere
For loue of god ten fast aboute thy spere
For whan thyn hornes newe gynnen spryng
Than shal she come ỳ may my blysse bryng

The day is more, and lenger euery nyght
Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho
And that the sonne went his course vnright
By lenger way than it was wonte to go
And sayd, ywis I drede me euer mo
The sunnes sonne Pheton be on lyue
And that his fathers carte amysse he dryue

Upon the walles faste eke wolde he walke
And on the grekes hoste he wolde se
And to him selfe right thus he wolde talke
Lo, yonder is myn owne lady fre
Or els yonder, there the tentes be
And thence cometh this ayre that is so soote
That in my soule I fele it doth me boote

And hardily this wynde that more and more
Thus stoundmele encreaseth in my face
Is of my ladyes depe sighes sore
I preue it thus, for in none other space
Of al this towne, saue onely in thys place
Fele I no wynde, that sowneth so like payne
It sayth alas, why twyned be we twayne

This longe tyme he dryueth forth right thus
Tyl fully passed was the nynthe nyght
And aye besyde hym was this Pandarus
That besely dyd al his ful myght
Hym to comforte, and make his hert light
Yeuing him hope alway the tenthe morowe
That she shal comen, & stynten al hys sorowe

Upon that other syde eke was Creseyde
With women fewe, amõge the grekes stronge
For whiche ful oft a day, alas she seyde
That I was borne, wel may min hert longe
After my dethe, for nowe lyue I to longe
Alas, and I ne may it not amende
For nowe is worse than euer yet I wende

My father nyl for nothyng do me grace
To gone ayen, for aught I can hym queme
And if so be, that I my terme pace
My Troylus shal in his hert deme
That I am false, & so it may wel seme
Thus shal I haue vnthonke on euery syde
That I was borne so welaway the tyde

And if that I me put in ieopardye
To stele away by nyght, and it befal
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye
Or els lo, thys drede I moste of al
Thus in the hondes of some wretche I fal
I nam but loste, al be myn hert trewe
Nowe mighty god, thou on my sorow rewe

Ful pale ywoxen was her bryght face
Her lymmes leane, as she that al the day
Stode whan she durst, & loked on the place
There she was borne, and dwelt had aye
And al the nyght wepyng alas she laye
And thus dyspeyred out of al cure
She lad her lyfe, thys wofull creature

Ful ofte a day she sighed eke for distresse
And in her selfe she went aye purtrayeng
Of Troylus the great worthynesse
And al hys goodly wordes recordyng
Sens first that day her loue began to spring
And thus she sette her wofull hert a fyre
Through remembraunce of ỳ she gan desyre

In al this worlde there nys so cruel hert
That her had herd complaynen in her sorow
That nold haue wept̃ for her paynes smert
So tenderly she wept, bothe eue & morowe
Her neded no teares for to borowe
And this was yet the worste of al her payne
Ther was no wight, to whom she durst plaine

Ful rewfully she loked vpon Troye
Beheld the toures high, and eke the hallis
Alas (qõ she) the pleasaunce and the ioye
The whiche ỳ nowe al turned in to gal is
Haue I had ofte, within yondet wallis
O Troylus, what doest thou now she seyde
Lorde whether ỳ yet thynke vpon Creseyde

Alas

Alas, that I ne had ytrowed on your loze
And went with you, as ye me redde er this
Than had I nowe not syghed halfe so soze
Who might haue sayd, that I had don amis
To steale away with suche one as he is
But al to late cometh the leechcraye
Whan men the coyste vnto the graue caraye

To late is nowe to speke of that matere
Prudence alas, one of thyn eyen thre
We lacked alway, er that I came here
Foz on tyme passed wel remembred me
And present tyme eke couthe I wel se
But future tyme, er I was in the snare
Couthe I not sene, ꝑ causeth nowe my care

But natheleſſe, betyde what betyde
I shal to mozowe at night, by erst oz west
Out of this hoste steale, on some syde
And gone with Troylus, where as him lest
This purpose wol I holde, & this is the best
No force of wicked tongues iangleryе
Foz euer on loue, haue wzetches had enuye

Foz who so wol of euery wozde take hede
Oz riden hem by euery wightes wit
Ne shal he neuer thziuen out of dzede
Foz that that some men blamen euer yet
Lo, other maner folke commenden it
And as foz me, foz al suche baryaunce
Felicite clepe I my lusty saunce

Foz whiche, without any wozdes mo
To Troye I wol, as foz conclusyoun
But god it wote, er fully monthes two
She was ful ferre fro that entencyoun
Foz bothe Troylus and Troye toun
Shal knotlesse thzoughout her herte slyde
Foz she wol take a purpose foz to abyde

This Diomede, of whom I you tel gan
Goth nowe within hym selfe aye arguing
With al the sleight and al that euer he can
Howe he maye best with shortest tarying
Into hys nette Creseydes hert bzyng
To this entent he couthe neuer fyne
To fisshen her, he layde out boke and lyne

But natheleſſe, wel in his hert he thought
That she nas nat without a loue in Troye
Foz neuer sithen he her thence bzought
Ne couthe he sene her laugh, oz maken ioye
He wyst howe best her herte foz to acoye
But foz talley, he sayd nought it ne greueth
Foz he ꝑ naught assayeth naught atcheueth

Yet sayd he to hym selfe vpon a nyght
Nowe am I nat a foie, that wote wel howe
Herwo is, foz loue of another wyght
And herupon to gon assaye her nowe
I may wel wete, it nyl nat ben my prowe
Foz wyse folke in bokes it expresse
Men shal nat wowe a wight in hrynesse

But who so might winnen suche a flour
Fro him, foz whō she mourneth night & daye
He myght sayne he were a conquerour
And right anone, as he that bolde was aye
Thought in his hert, hap howe hap maye
Al shulde I dye, I wol her herte seche
I shal no moze lesen b... my speche

This Diomede, as bokes vs declare
Was in his nedes prest and corragyous
With sterne voyce, & mighty limmes square
Hardy, testyfe, stronge, and chyualrous
Of dedes lyke hys father Tydius
And some men sayne, he was of tonge large
And heire he was, of Calcidony and Arge

Creseyde meane was of her stature
Therto of shappe, of face, and eke of chere
There myght ben no fayzer creature
And ofte tyme this was her maner
To gone ystressed with her heeres clere
Downe by her colere, at her backe behynde
Which with a thzede of gold she wold bynde

And saue her bzowes ioyneden yfere
There nas no lacke, in aught I can espyen
But foz to speken of her eyen clere
Lo, trewly they written that her seyen
That paradis stode formed in her eyen
And with her riche beaute euer moze
Strooue Ioue i her, ay which of hē was moze

She sobze was eke, simple, and wise withal
The beste ytaught eke that might be
And goodly of her speche in general
Charitable, estately, lusty, and free
Ne neuer moze ne lacked her pyte
Tendre herted, slydyng of corage
But trewly I can nat tel her age

And Troylus wel worth was in bight
And complete formed by proporcyoun

So wel, that kynde it naught amendē might
Yonge, frelhe, stronge, and hardy as lyoun
Trewe as stele, in eche condicioun
One of the beste entercheb creature
That is or shal, whūe ỳ the worlde may dure

And certaynly, in story as I it is fonde
That Troylus was neuer vnto no wyght
As in his tyme, in no degre seconde
In daryng do, that longeth to a knyght
A might a gyaunt passen him of myght
His herte aye with the first and with the best
Stode peregal to dare done what him lest

But for to tellen forthe of Diomede
It fil, that after on the tenthe day
Ens that Creseyde out of the cyte yede
This Diomede, as freth as braūche in may
Came to the tente there as Calcas lay
And fayned him with Calcas haue to done
But what he mente, I shal you tellen sone

Creseyde at shorte wordes for to tel
Welcomed him, a down him by her sette
And he was eche ynough to maken dwel
And after this, withouten longe lette
The spyces and the wine men forth hem fet
And forthe they spoke of this and that yfere
As frendes done, of which some shall ye here

He gan first fallen of the werre in speche
Betwixen hem and the folke of Troye toun
And of thassiege he gan eke her beseche
To tellen hym what was her opynyoun
For that demaunde he so discenderth doun
To asken her, if that her straunge thought
The grekes gise, a werkes that they wrought

And why her father taryeth so longe
To wedden her vnto some worthy wight
Creseyde that was in her paynes stronge
For love of Troylus her owne knyght
So forforth as she cunnyng had or might
Answerde hym tho, but as of his entente
It semed nat she wyste what he mente

But natheleesse thys ylke Diomede
Gan on hym selfe assure, a thus he seyde
If I aright haue taken on you hede
Me thynketh thus, o lady myn Creseyde
That sens I first hond on your bridel leyde
When y oute came of Troy by the morowe
Me might I neuer sene you but in sorowe

I can nat sayne what may the cause be
But if for loue of some Troyan it were
The whiche right sore wolde athynken me
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there
Shulden spyl a quarter of a teere
Or pytously your seluen so begyle
For dredelesse it is nat worthe the whyle

The folke of Troye, as who sayth al a some
In prison ben, as ye your seluen se
Fro thence shal nat one on lyue come
For al the golde atwixen sonne and se
Trusteth wel, and vnderstondeth me
There shal nat one to mercy gone on lyue
Al were he lorde of worldes twyse fyue

Such wrech on hem for fetching of Heleyne
There shal be take, er that we hence wende
That Maynes, which ỳ goddes bē of pein
Shal ben agast that grekes wol hem shend
And men shal drede vnto the worldes ende
From hence forthe, to ravyshen any quene
So cruel shal our wrethe on hem be sene

And but if Calkas lede vs with ambages
That is to sayne, with double wordes slye
Suche as mē clepen a word with two visages
Ye shal wel knowen that I nat ne lye
And al this thing right sene it with your eye
And that anon, ye nyl nat trowe howe soone
Nowe taketh hede, for it is for to donne

What wene ye your wyse father wolde
Hauen yeuen Antenor for you anon
If he ne wyste that the cyte shulde
Distroyed ben? why nay so mote I gone
He knewe ful wel there shal nat scapen one
That Troyan is, and for the great fere
He durst nat that ye dwelt lenger there

What wol ye more, a louesom lady dere
Let Troy and troyans fro your herte passe
Drine out ỳ bitter hope, a make good chere
And clepe ayen the beaute of your face
That ye with salte teeres so deface
For Troy is brought in suche a ieopardye
That it to saue is nowe no remedye

And thynketh wel, ye shal in grekes fynde
A more parfyte loue, er it be nyght
Than any Troyan is, and more kynde
And bet to seruen you wol don his myght
And if ye vouchsafe my lady bryght

I wol

I wol ben he, to ſeruen you my ſelue
Ye leuer than be lorde of Grees twelue

And with that worde he gan to waxen reed
And in his ſpeche, a lytel whyle he quoke
And caſte aſyde a lytel with his heed
And ſtynte a whyle, and afterwarde he woke
And ſobrely on her he threwe his loke
And ſayd I am, al be it to you no joye
As gentyl a man, as any wight in Troye

For if my father Tydeus, he ſeyde
Alyue had, I had ben er this
Of Calcidony and Arge a kyng Creſeyde
And ſo hope I that I ſhal be ywis
But he was ſlayne alas, the more harme is
Unhappely at Thebes al to rathe
Polymyte, and many a man to ſcathe

But hertē myne, ſythe that I am your man
And ben the firſt, of whom I ſeche grace
To ſeruen you as hertely as I can
And euer ſhal whyle I to lyue haue ſpace
So that, er I departe out of thys place
Ye wol me graunte that I may to morowe
Mo better layſer tel you of my ſorowe

What ſhulde I tel his wordes that he ſeide
He ſpake ynough for o day at the meſt
It preueth wel he ſpake ſo, that Creſeyde
Graunted on the morowe at his requeſt
For to ſpeke with him at the leeſt
So that he nolde ſpeke of ſuche matere
And thus she to hym ſayd, as ye mowe here

As she that had her hert on Troylus
So faſte, that there may it none arace
And ſtraungely she ſpake, and ſayde thus
O Diomede, I loue that yike place
There I was borne, a Joues of thy grace
Delyuer it ſone of al that doth it care
God for thy myght ſo leue it wel to fare

That grekes wold her wrath on troy wreke
If that they might I knowe it wel ywis
But it ſhal naught befallen as ye ſpeke
And god to forne, and farther ouer this
I wote my father wyſe and redy is
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde
So dere am I the more vnto hym holde

That grekes ben of high condicioun
I wotte eke wel, but certayne men ſhal finde
As worthy folke within Troye toun
As comyng, as parfyte, and as kynde
As ben betwixt Dyeades and Inde
And that ye coulde wel your lady ſerue
I trowe eke wel, her thonke for to deſerue

But as to ſpeke of loue, ywis she ſeyde
I had a lorde, to whom I wedded was
The whole myn herte was al tyl he deyde
And other loue, as helpe me nowe Pallas
There in myn hert nys, ne neuer was
And that ye ben of noble and high kinrede
I haue wel herde it tellen out of drede

And that doth me to haue ſo great a wonder
That ye wol ſcorne any woman ſo
Eke god wote, loue and I ben fer a ſonder
I am diſpoſed bet ſo mote I go
Unto my dethe playne and make wo
For what I ſhal after done, I can nat ſay
But trewely as yet me lyſte nat play

Myn hert is nowe in tribulacion;
And ye in armes buſy day by day
Herafter when ye wonnen haue the toun
Paraventure than, ſo it happen may
That whan I ſe that I neuer ere ſay
Thā wol I werke that I neuer ere wrought
This worde to you ynough ſuffyſen ought

To morow eke wol I ſpeken with you faine
So that ye touchen naught of this matere
And whan you lyſt, ye may come here agayn
And er ye gon, thus muche I ſay you here
As helpe me Pallas, with her herres clere
Yf that I ſhulde of any greke haue routhe
It ſhulde be your ſelfen by my trouthe

I ſay nat therfore that I wol you loue
Ne ſay nat nay, but in concluſyoun
I meane wel by god that ſit above
And therwithal she caſte her eyen doun
And gan to ſigh, and ſaid, Troilus o Troy toun
Yet bydde I god, in quiet and in reſte
I may you ſene, or do myn hert breſte

But in effecte, and ſhortely for to ſaye
This Diomede al freſhly newe agayne
Gan preaſen on, and faſt her mercy prayn
And after this the ſothe for to ſayne
Her glone he toke, of whiche he was ful fayn
And fynally, whan it was worden eue
And al was wel, he roſe and toke his leue

The

The bryght Titans folowed and aye taught
The way there brode Phebus downe alight
And Cytherea her chare horse ouer raught
To whyrle out of the lyon, if she myght
And Signifer his candels sheweth bright
Whan that Creseyde vnto her bed wente
Within her fathers fayre bright tente

Returnyng in her soule aye vp and downe
The wordes of this sodayne Diomede
His great estate, and perel of the towne
And that she was alone, and had nede
Of frendes helpe, and thus began to brede
The cause why, the sothe for to tell
She toke fully purpose for to dwell.

The morow came, & goostly for to speke
This Diomede is come vnto Creseyde
And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke
So wel he for him selfe spake and seyde
That al her syghes sore, downe he leyde
And finally, the sothe for to sayne
He lefte her the great of al her payne

And after this, the story telleth vs
That she him yaue the fayre baye stede
The which she ones wan of Troylus
And eke a broche (& that was lytel nede)
That Troylus was, she yaue this Diomede
And eke the bet from sorowe him to relese
She made him weare a penell of her sleue

I fynde eke in stories els where
Whan through ỳ body hurt was Diomede
Of Troylus, tho wepte she many a teere
Whan that she sawe his wyde woũdes blede
And that she toke to kepen him good hede
And for to healen him of his smerte
Men sayne, I not, ỳ she yaue him her herte

But trewly the story telleth vs
There made neuer woman more wo
Than she, whan that she failed Troylus
She sayde alas, for now is clene ago
My name in trouthe of loue for euermo
For I haue failed one the gentylest
That euer was, and one the worthyest

Alas, of me vnto the worldes ende
Shal neyther ben ywritten ne ysonge
No good word, for these bokes wol me shẽde
Ironed shal I ben on many a tonge
Throughout ỳ world, my bel shal be ronge
And women most wol hate me of all
Alas, that suche a caas me shulde fall

They wol sayne, in as moche as in me is
I haue hem done dishonour welaway
Al be I not the first that did amys
What helpeth that, to done my blame away
But sens I se there is no better way
And that to late is nowe for me to rewe
To Diomede I wol algate be trewe

But Troylus, sens I no better may
And sens that thus departen ye and I
Yet pray I god so yeue you right good day
As for the gentylest knyght trewly
That euer I sawe, to seruen faythfully
And best can aye his ladyes honour kepe
And with that worde she braste anon to wepe

And certes you ne haten shal I neuer
And frendes loue, that shal ye haue of me
And my good worde, al shulde I lyuen euer
And truely I wolde right sory be
For to seue you in aduersyte
And gyltelesse I wot wel I you leue
And al shal passe, & thus take I my leue

But trewly how longe it was betwene
That she forsoke him for this Diomede
There is none auctour telleth it I wene
Take euery man nowe to his bokes hede
He shal no terme fynden, out of drede
For though that he began to wowe her soone
Er he her wan, yet was there more to done

Me me ne lyste this fely woman chyde
Further than the story wol deuyse
Her name alas, is publyshed so wyde
That for her gylte it ought ynough suffyse
And if I might excuse her in any wyse
For she so sory was for her vntrouthe
I wys I wolde excuse her yet for routhe

This Troylus, as I before haue tolde
Thus driueth forth, as wel as he hath might
But ofte was his herte hote and colde
And namely that like nynthe nyght
Which on the morow she had him behyght
To come ayen, god wote ful lytel reste
Had he that nyght, nothyng to slepe him leste

The laurer crowned Phebus, with his heate
Gan in his course aye vpwarde as he wente

To warmen of the eest see the wawes weste
And Cyzes doughter longe, with stresse ent
Whan Troylus his Pandare after sent
And on the walles of the towne they pleyde
To loke, if they can sene aught of Creseyde

Tyl it was noone, they stoden forth to se
Who that there came, and euery maner wight
That came fro ferre, they sayden it was she
Tyl that they coulden knowen him aryght
Now was his hert dull, nowe was it lyght
And thus bejaped stoden forth to stare
Aboute naught, this Troylus a Pandare

To Pandarus, this Troylus tho seyde
For aught I wot, before noone sikerly
Into this town ne cometh not here Creseyde
She hath ynough to done hardely
To wynnen from her father, so trowe I
Her olde father wol yet make her dyne
Er that she go, god yeue his herte pyne

Pandarus answerd, it may wel ben certayne
And for thy let vs dyne, I the beseche
And after noone thã mayst thou come agayn
And home they go, without more speche
And comen ayen, but longe may they seche
Er that they fynde that they after gape
Fortune hem dorste thinketh for to iape

(Qõ Troylus) I se wel nowe that she
Is taryed with her olde father so
That er she come it wol nyghe euen be
Come forth, I wol vnto the yate go
These porters ben vnkonnyng euermo
And I wol done hem holden vp the yate
As naught ne were, al though she come late

The day goth fast, & after that came eue
And yet came nat to Troylus Creseyde
He loketh forthe by hedge, by tree, by greue
And ferre his heed ouer the wal he leyde
And at the last he turned him, and seyde
By god I wote her meanyng nowe Pandare
Almoste ywis al newe was my care

Now doutreles this lady can her goode
I wote she cometh rydyng prively
I cõmende her wisdom by myne hoode
She wol nat maken people merely
Gauren on her whan þ she cometh, but softely
By nyght in to the town she thynketh ryde
And dere brother, thinke not longe to abyde

We haue nim gist eis for to dorpwis
And Pandarus, nowe wylte thou trowen me
Haue here my trouth I se her, yonde she is
Heaue vp thyn eyen man, mayst thou nat se
Pandare answerde, nay so mote I the
Al wrõg by god, what saist þ mã where is
That I se yonde, nys but a farre cart

Alas, thou sayest right sothe (qõ Troylus)
But hardely it is not al for nought
That in myne hert I now reioyce thus
It is ayenst some good, I haue a thought
Not I nat howe, but sens þ I was wrought
Ne felte I suche a comfort dare I say
She cometh to night, my lyfe þ durst I lay

Pandarus answerde, it may be wel ynough
And helde with him, of al that euer he sayde
But in his herte he thought, and softe lough
And to him self ful soberly he sayde
From hasel wodde, there ioly Robyn pleyde
Shal come al that thou abydest here
Ye, farwel al the snowe of ferne yere

The wardeyn of the yates gan to call
The folke, which þ without the yates were
And bad hem dryuen in her beestes all
For al the nyght they must bleuen there
And ferre within the nyght, wt many a tere
This Troylus gan homwarde for to ryde
For wel he seeth it helpeth nat to abyde

But natheles he gladded him in this
He thought he missacounted had his day
And sayd, I vnderstonde haue al amys
For thilke nyght I laste Creseyde say
She sayd I shal ben here, if that I may
Er that the moone, o derr herte swete
The Lyon passe, out of this Aryete

For whiche she may yet hold al her byheste
And on the morowe, vnto the yate he wente
And vp & downe, by west and eke by este
Upon the walles made he many a wente
But al for naught, his hope alway him blente
For which at nyght, in sorowe & sykes sore
He went him home, without en any more

This hope al clene out of his hert fledde
He ne hath wheron nowe longer for to hong
But for þ payne him thought his hert bledde
So were his throwes sharpe, & wõder strõg
For whan he sawe that she abode so longe

He

ye wyste what he iudgen of it myght
Sens she hath broken that she him behyght

The thirde, forthe, fyfte, and fyxte day
After tho dayes ten, of which I tolde
Betwyxen hope and drede his hert lay
Yet somwhat trustyng on her hestes olde
But whan he saw she nolde her terme holde
He can nowe sene none other remedye
But for to shape him sone for to dye

Therwith the wicked spirite, god vs blesse
Which that men clepen woode ialousye
Gan in him crepe, in al this heuynesse
For which bycause he wolde sone dye
He ne ete ne dronke for his malancolye
And eke from euery company he fledde
This was the lyfe that al this tyme he ledde

He so defayte was, that no maner man
Vnneth him myght knowen there he wente
So was he leane, and therto pale and wan
And feble, that he walketh by potente
And with his ire he thus him selfe shente
But who so asked him wherof him smerte
He sayd, his harme was al aboute his herte

Priam ful ofte, and eke his mother dere
His brethern & his sustren gan him frayne
Why he so sorowful was in al his chere
And what thing was ỹ cause of al his payne
But al for naught, he nolde his cause playne
But saide, he felte a greuous maladye
Aboute his herte, and sayne he wolde dye

So on a daye he laye him downe to slepe
And so byfel that in slepe him thought
That in a forest faste he walked to wepe
For loue of her, ỹ him these paynes wrought
And vp and downe, as he that forest sought
He mette he sawe a bore, with tuskes greate
That slept ayenst the bryght sonnes heate

And by this bore, faste in her armes folde
Lay kyssyng aye his ladye bryght Creseyde
For sorow of whiche, whan he it gan beholde
And for dispite, out of his slepe he breyde
And loude he cryed on Pandarus, and seyde
O Pandarus, now know I croppe & roote
I nam but deed, there nys non other boote

My lady bryght Creseyde hath me betrayde
In whom I trusted most of any wight
She els where hath nowe her hert apayde
The bysful goddes, through her great myght
Haue in my dreame yshewed it ful right
Thus in my dreme, Creseyde haue I beholde
And al this thyng to Pandarus he tolde

O my Creseyde alas, what subtylte
What newe lust, what beaute, what science
What wrathe of iust cause haue ye to me
What gylte of me, what fel experience
Hath me rafte alas, thyne aduertence
O trust, o fayth, o depe assurance
Who hath me rafte Creseyde, al my plesaunce

Alas, why let I you from hence go
For which wel nygh out of my wit I breyde
Who shal now trow on any othes mo
God wote I wende, o lady bryght Creseyde
That euery worde was gospel that ye seyde
But who may bet begyle, if him lyste
Than he on whom men weneu best to tryste

What shal I done, my Pandarus alas
I fele now so sharpe a newe payne
Sens that there is no remedye in this caas
That bet were it, I with myn hondes twayne
My seluen slow, than alway thus to playne
For through ỹ deth my wo shuld haue an ende
There euery day with lyfe my selfe I shende

Pandare answerde & sayd, alas the whyle
That I was borne, haue I not sayd er this
That dreames many a maner man begyle
And why, for folke expounden hem amys
How darst thou sayne that false thy lady is
For any dreame, right for thyn owne drede
Let be this thought, ỹ canst no dremes rede

Paraventure there ỹ dreamest of this bore
It may so be that it may signifye
Her father, whiche that olde is and eke hore
Ayen the sonne lythe on poynte to dye
And she for sorowe gynneth wepe and crye
And kysseth him, there he lythe on the groũde
Thus shuldest thou thy dreme arizt expoũde

How might I than done (qõ Troylus)
To knowe of thys, yea were neuer so lyte
Nowe sayest ỹ wysely (qõ this Pandarus)
My rede is this, sens thou canst wel endyte
That hastely a letter thou her wryte
Through which ỹ shalt wel bringen aboute
To know a sothe, of ỹ thou arte in doute

And if now why, for this I dare well sayne
That if so is, that she vnkinde we be
I can not knowen that she wol write agayne
And if she write, thou shalt ful sone yse
As whether she hath any lyberte
To come ayen, or els in some clause
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause

Thou hast not written to her sens þ she went
Nor she to the, and this I durste lay
There may suche cause ben in her entente
That hardely thou wolte thy selven say
That her abode the best is for you tway
Now write her than, & thou shalt frie sone
I sothe of al, there is no more to done

Acorded ben to this conclusyoun
And that anon, these yfere lordes two
And hastely sate Troylus adoun
And rolleth in his hert to and fro
How he may best discryuen her his wo
And to Creseyde his owne lady dere
He wrote right thus, & sayd as ye may here

¶ The copy of the letter.

Right fresh flour, whose I haue ben & shal
Withouten parte of els where ferther
Both hert, body, lyfe, lust, thought, and al
I woful wight, in euery humble wyse
That tonge can tell, or hert may deuyse
As ofte as matter occupyeth place
Me recōmaunde vnto your noble grace

Lyketh it you to weten swete herte
As ye wel know, how long tyme agon
That ye me lefte in aspre paynes smerte
Whan that ye went, of which yet bote non
Haue I non had, but euer worse bygon
Fro day to day am I, and so more dwell
While it you lyst, of wele and wo my well

For whiche to you, with dredefull hert trewe
I write, as he that sorowe dryueth to write
Thy wo, that euery houre encreaseth newe
Complaynyng as I dare, or can endyte
And that defaced is, that may ye wyte
The teares, whiche þ from myne eyen rayne
That wolden speke, if þ they durst & playne

You first beseche I, that your eyen clere
To loke on this defouled ye nat holde
And ouer al this, that ye my lady dere
Wol vouche safe this letter to beholde
And by the cause eke of myn teres colde
That fleeth my wyt, if aught amys me ferm
Forgeue it me, myne owne swete herte

Yf any seruaunt durst or ought of ryght
Upon his lady pitously complayne
Than were I that I ought be that wight
Cōfidred this, þ ye these monthes twayne
Haue tarryed, there ye sayden sothe to sayne
But ten dayes ye nolde in holde soiourne
But in two monthes, yet ye not retourne

But for as muche, as me more nedes lyke
Al that you lyst, I dare nat playne more
But humbly, with sorowful syghes syke
You write I myn vnfeyned sorowes sore
Fro day to day, desyring euer more
To knowen fully, if your wyl it were
How ye haue fared and don while ye be there

Whose welfare and hraie eke god encrease
In honour suche, that vpwarde in degree
It growe alway, so that it neuer cease
Right as your herte aye can my lady free
Deuyse, I pray to god so more it be
And graunt it that ye soone vpon me rewe
As wisely as in al I am to you trewe

And if you lyketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whose wo ther may no wyt discryue
I can no more, but ther-is of euery care
Er writyng of this letter I was on lyue
Al redy out my woful gost to dryue
Whiche I delay, and holde him yet in honde
Upon the syght of mater of your sonde

Myne eyen two in payne, with which I se
Of sorowful teares salte arn worn welles
Thy longe in playnt of myne aduersyte
Thy good in harme, myn ese eke worn hel is
Thy ioye in wo, I can sey nowe nought ellis
But turned is, for whiche my lyfe I wary
Euery ioye or ease in his contrary

Which vp your comming home ayen to Troy
Ye may redresse, and more a thousande syth
Than euer I had encresen in me ioy
For was there neuer hert yet so blythe
To haue his lyfe, as I shal ben as swythe
As I you se, and though no maner token
Can meue you, yet thynketh on your trouthe

And if so be my gylte hath derthe defraud
Or if you lyst no more vpon me se

In

Ja guerdon yet of that J haue you serued
Beseche J you, myne owne lady fre
That herupon ye wolden wryte me
For lowe of god, my right lode sterre
That deth may make an end of al my werre

Yf other cause aught doth you for to dwel
That th your letter ye may me recomforte
For though to me your absence is an hel
With patience J wol my wo comforte
And with your letter of hope J wol disporte
Now wryteth swete, & let me thus nat plaine
With hope or deth, delyuereth me fro payne

Jwis myne owne dere herte trewe
J wot that whan ye next vpon me se
So soft haue J myn heale, & eke myne hewe
Creseyde shal nat conne knowen me
Jwys myn herres day, my lady fre
So thirsteth aye myn herte to beholde
Your beaute, that dureth my lyfe J holde

J say no more, al haue J for to sey
To you wel more than J telle may
But whether that ye do me lyue or dey
Yet pray J god, so yeue you right good day
And fareth wel goodly fayre fresshe may
As ye that lyfe or dethe me may cõmaunde
And to your trouth aye J me recõmaunde

With heale suche, that but ye yeuen me
The same heale, J shal non heale haue
In you lyth, whan you lyst that it so be
The day in whiche me clothen shal my graue
And in you my lyfe, in you might for to saue
Me fro distrake of al paynes smerte
And fare nowe wel myne owne swete herte.

Le vostre T.

This letter forth was sent vnto Creseyde
Of which her answere in effecte was this
Ful prouisly she wrote ayen, and seyde
That also sone as she myght ywis
She wold come, & meude al that was amys
And fynally she wrote and sayde then
She wolde come, ye, but she nyst when

But in her letter made she suche festes
That wõder was, & swore she loued him best
Of whiche he founde but botomles byhestes
But Troylus thou mayst now erst & west
Pype in an Jy leefe if that the lest (chaũce
Thus goth ỳ world, god shylde vs fro myscha-
And euery wight ỳ meneth trouth auaunce

Encreasen gan the wo fro day to nyght
Of Troylus, for taryeng of Creseyde
And lessen gan his hope and eke his myght
For which al down he in his bedde him leyde
He ne ete, dronke, ne slept, ne worde seyde
Imagynyng aye that she was vnkynde
For which wel nigh he wext out of his mide

This dreme, of which J told haue eke before
May neuer come out of his remembraunce
He thought aye wel, he had his lady lore
And that Joues, of his purueyaunce
Him shewed had in slepe the signyfiaunce
Of her vntrouth, and his disauenture
And ỳ the bore was shewed him in figure

For whiche he for Sybille his suster sente
That called was Cassandre eke al aboute
And al his dreame he tolde her er he stente
And her besought alloyen him the doute
Of the stronge bore, with tuskes stoute
And fynally, within a lytel stounde
Cassãdre him gan thus hys dreame expoũde

She gan first smyle, and sayd o brother dere
Yf thou a sothe of this desyrest to knowe
Thou muste a fewe of olde stores here
To purpose howe that fortune ouerthrow
Hath lordes old, through which vnto a throw
Thou shalt this bore know, & of what kynde
He comen is, as men in bokes fynde

Diane, which that wroth was and in yre
For grekes nolde done her sacrifyce
Ne encens vpon her auter set on fyre
She for that grekes gon her so dispise
Wrake her in a wonder cruel wyse
For with a bore as great as ore in stall
She made vp frete her corne and vynes all

To slee the bore was al the countrey reysed
Amonge whiche there came this bore to
A mayd, one of this world the best yprayised
And Meleager, lorde of that countre
He loued so this fresshe mayden fre
That with his manhode, er he wolde stente
This bore he slough, and her ỳ heed he sente

Of which, as olde bokes tellen vs
There rose a conteke and a great enuye
And of this lorde descended Tideus
By ligne, or els olde bokes lye
But howe this Meleager gan to dye

Through his mother, wol I you not tell
For al to longe it were for to dwell

She tolde eke howe Tideus, er the feute
Unto the stronge cyte of Thebes
(To claymen kyngdom of the cyte) went
For his felawe dan Polimites
Of which the brother dan Ethiocles
Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the strength
This tolde she by processe al by length

She tolde eke howe Hemonydes atterte
Whan Tydeus slough fyfty knyghtes stout
She tolde eke al the prophecies by herte
And how that seuen kynges with her route
Besiegeden the cyte al aboute
And of the holy serpent, and the well
And of the furyes all she gan him tell

Associat profugũ, Tideus prio Polimidem
Tidea legatum docet insidiasq; frem̃dis
Tertius hermodien canit & vates lacrimantes
Mors furie Leuine quito narrãtur et ãgues
Quartus habet reges ineuntes prelia septem
Archynon bustum, sexto ludiq; leguntur
Dat Grajos Thebes bate septimis vmbris
Octauo cecidit Tideus spes vita pelagis
Ypomedon nono moritur, cum Parthonepeo
Fulmine pereussũ, decimo Campaus superatur
Undecimo sese perimunt per vulnera fratres
Argiuam flentem, narrat duodenis & ignem.

Of Archinoxies burveng, and the playes
And how Amphioxar fyl through þ̃ grounde
How Tideus was slayne, lorde of Argeyes
And how Hypomedon in a tyrel stounde
Was dreynt, & ded Parthonepe of wounde
And also how Campaneus the proude
With thõder dynte was slayne, þ̃ cryed loude

She gan eke tel him howe þ̃ eyther brother
Ethiocles and Polimites also
At a fearmyssche, eche of hem slough other
And of Argyues wepyng and her wo
And how þ̃ town was brent she tolde eke tho
And tho discended downe from ieslles olde
To Diomede, & thus she spake and tolde

This selfe boxe betokeneth Diomede
Tideus sonne, that downe discended is
Fro Melrager, that made the boxe to blede
And thy lady, where so she be ywis
This Diomede her herte hath, and she his

Wepe if thou wolte or leaue, for out of doute
This Diomede is in, and thou art oute

Thou sayest nat soth (qõ he) thou sorcerest
With al thy false gosse of prophecie
Thou wenest ben a great deuyneresse
Howe ferst thou nat this foole of fantasye
Payned her on ladyes for to lye
Away (qõ he) there Ioues yeue the sorowe
Thou shalt be fals paraunture yet to morowe

As wel thou mightest lyen on good Alceste
That was of creatures (but men lye)
That euer weren, kyndest and the beste
For whan her husbonde was in iropardye
To dye him selfe, but if she wolde oye
She chese for him to dye, & gon to hel
And starte vpon, as vs the bokes tell

Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte
For-wate his wo, for anger of her speche
And from his bedde all sodainly he sterte
As though al hole him had ymade a leche
And day by day he gan enquire and seche
A sothe of this, with al his ful cure
And thus he dryueth forth his auenture

Fortune, whiche that permutacion
Of al thinges hath, as it is her committed
Through purueyannce and disposycion
Of hygh Ioue, as trigues shal ben flytted
Fro folk i folk, or whã they shal ben smytted
Gan pul away the fethers bright of Troye
Fro day to day, tyl they ben bare of ioye

Amonge al this, the fyne of the iesperdy
Of Hector gan approchen wonder blyue
The fate wolde his soule shulde vnbodye
And shapen had a meane it out to dryue
Ayenst which fate him helpeth not to stryue
But on a day to fyghten gan he wende
At which alas, he caught his lyues ende

For which me thinketh euery manet wight
That haunteth armes, ought to be wayle
The deth of him that was so noble a knyght
For as he drough a kynge by thauentayle
Unware of this, Achilles through the mayle
And through the body gan him for to eryue
And thus þ̃ worthy knyght was refte of lyue

For whome as olde bokes tellen vs

was

Was made suche wo, ỹ tonge it may nat tell
And namely the sorowe of Troylus
That next hym was of worthynesse the wel
And in thys wo gan Troylus to dwel
That what for sorowe, lone, and for vnreste
Ful oft a day he bad hys herte breste

But natheleſſe, though he gon him dispayre
And drede aye that his lady was vntrewe
Yet aye on her hys herte gan repayre
And as these louers done, he sought ay newe
To gete ayen Creseyde bryght of hewe
And in his hert he werne her excusyng
That Calcas caused al her taryeng

And oft tyme he was in purpose greate
Him selwen lyke a pylgrim to disgyse
To seme her, but he may nat counterfeate
To ben vnknowen of folke that weren wise
Ne fynde excuse aryght that may suffyce
If he amonge the grekes knowen were
For whiche he wepte ful oft many a tere

To her he wrote yet oft tyme al newe
Ful pytously, he lefte it nat for slouthe
Beseching her, sens that he was trewe
That she wol come ayen & holde her trouthe
For which Creseyde vpon a day for routh
Take it so, touchyng al thys matere
Wrote him ayen, and sayd as ye may here

Cupides sonne, ensample of goodlyhede
O swerde of knyghthode, sours of gētilnesse
How might a wight in turment and in drede
And heaulesse you sende, as yet gladnesse
Herteles, sicke, & in distresse
Sens ye with me, nor I with you may deale
You neither sende I herte may nor heale

Your letters ful the paper al yplaynted
Conceyued hath myn herres pyte
I haue eke sene with teres al depaynted
Your letter, and howe that ye requiren me
To come ayen, whiche yet ne may not be
But why, leste that this letter founden were
To mencion ne make I nowe for fere

Greuous to me (god wote) is your vnreste
Your haste, and that the goddes ordynaunce
It semeth nat ye take it for the beste
Nor other thyng nys in your remembraunce
As thynketh me, but onely your pleasaunce
Eat beth nat wroth, and that I you beseche
For that I tary is al for wicked speche

For I haue herde wel more then I wende
Touchyng vs two, how thiges haue ystonde
Whiche I shal with dissymulyng amende
And beth nat wroth, I haue eke vnderstōde
Howe ye ne do but holden me in honde
But nowe no force, I can nat in you gesse
But al trouthe and al gentylnesse

Come I wol, but yet in suche disioynte
I stonde as nowe, ỹ what yere, or what day
That this shal be, that can I not apoynte
But in effecte I pray you as I may
Of your good worde, & of your frendship ay
For trewely whyle that my lyfe may dure
As for a frende ye may in me assure

Yet pray I you on yuel ye ne take
That it is shorte, which that I to you write
I dare nat there I am wel letters make
Ne neuer yet ne couthe I wel endite
Eke greate effecte, men write in place lyte
Thentent is al, and nat the letters space
And fareth wel, god haue you in his grace.

La vostre C.

This Troylus thought this letter al straūge
Whan he it sawe, and sore vfully he sight
Him thought it like a kalendes of eschaunge
But fynally he ful ne trowen might
That she ne wolde him holden that she hight
For with ful yuel wyl lyste hym to leue
That loueth wel i such case thouz him greue

But natheleſſe, men sayn that at the laſte
For any thyng, men shal the sothe se
And suche a case betyde, and that as faste
That Troylus wel vnderstode that she
Was nat so kynde, as that her ought be
And fynally he wote nowe out of doute
That al is loste, that he hath ben aboute

Stode on a day in his melancolye
This Troylus, and in suspection
Of her, for whom he wende to dye
And so befyl, that throughout Troye town
As was the gyse, yborne was vp and down
I maner cote armoure, as sayth the storye
Before Deiphebe, in signe of his victorye

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius
Deiphebe it had rente fro Diomede
The same day, and when this Troylus

It lasted he gan to taken of it hede
Auysyng of the length and of the brede
And al the werke, but as he gan beholde
Ful sodayne ly his herte gan to colde

As he that on the coler fonde within
A broche, that he Creseyde gaue at morowe
That she from Troye muste nedes twyn
In remembraunce of hym, and of his sorowe
And she him sayde ayen her fayth to borowe
To kepe it aye, but nowe ful wel he wyste
Hys lady nas no lenger on to tryste

He gothe hym home, and gan ful sone sende
For Pandarus, and al this newe chaunce
And of this broch he tolde him worde & ende
Complayning of her hertes varyaunce
His longe loue, his trouth, and his penaunce
And after dethe, without wordes more
Ful faste he cryed, his reste him to restore

Thus spake he thus, O lady myn Creseyde
Where is your fayth, & wher is your behest
Wher is your loue, where is your trouth he
Of Diomede haue ye now al this fest (seide
Alas, I wolde haue trowed at the leest
That syns ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde
That ye thus nolde haue holden me in honde

Who shall nowe trowen on any othes mo
Alas I neuer wolde haue wende er this
That ye Creseyde coulde haue chaunged so
Ne but I had agylte, and done amis
So cruel wende I nat your herte ywis
To slee me thus, alas your name of trouthe
Is nowe forlorne, and that is al my routhe

Was there none other broche you lyste lete
To feste with your newe loue (quod he)
But thylke broche that I with teres wete
You gaue, as for a remembraunce of me
None other cause alas, ne had ye
But for dispite, and eke for that ye mente
Al vtterly to shewen your entente

Thorw which I se, þ clene out of your minde
Ye haue me caste, and I ne can nor may
For al this worlde, withyn myn herte fynde
To balouen you a quarter of a day
In cursed tyme I borne was welaway
That you thus dare me al this wo enduce
Yet loue I best of any creature

Nowe god (qõ he) me sende yet the grace
That I may meten with this Diomede
And trewely, if I haue myght and space
Yet shal I make I hope his lyues brede
Nowe god (qõ he) that aught est taken hede
To forthren trouthe, and wronges to punice
Why nilt thou don a vengeaunce of this vice

O Pandarus, that in dremes for to tryste
Me blamed hast, & wonder art ofte vpbreyde
Nowe maist thou sene thy selfe, if that þ lyst
How trewe is now thy nece bright Creseide
In sondry formes (god it wote) he seyde
The goddes shewen bothe ioye and tene
In slepe, and by my dreme it is nowe sene

And certaynly, withouten more speche
From hence forthe, as ferforthe as I may
Myn owne dethe in armes wol I seche
I recche nat howe soone be the day
But trewely Creseyde, swete may
Whom I haue with al my myght serued
That ye thus done, I haue it nat deserued

This Pandarus, that al these thinges herde
And wyste wel he sayd a sothe of thys
He nat a worde ayen to hym answerde
For sory of his frendes sorowe he is
And shamed for his nece hath done amis
And stante astonyed of these causes tway
As styl as stone, o worde ne coulde he say

But at the laste thus he spake, and seyde
My brother dere, I may do the no more
What should I sayne, I hate ywis Creseyde
And god it wote I wol hate her euer more
And that thou me besoughtest don of yore
Hauyng vnto myn honour ne my reste
Right no regarde, I dyd al that the leste

Yf I dyd aught, that might lyken the
It is me lefe, and of this treason nowe
God wote that it a sorowe is to me
And dredeles, for herres easte of you
Right fayne I wold amende it, wist I how
And fro this worlde, almighty god I pray
Deliuer her soone, I can no more say

Great was the sorowe & playnt of Troylus
But forthe her course fortune aye gan holde
Creseyde loueth the sonne of Tydeus
And Troylus mote wepe in cares colde
Such is this worlde, who so it can beholde

In eche eſtate is lytel herres reſte
God leue vs to take it for the beſte

In many cruel batayle out of drede
Of Troylus, this yſe noble knyght
(As men may in theſe olde bokes rede)
Was ſene his knyghthod, & hys great myght
And dredeleſſe hys yre day and nyght
Ful cruelly the grekes aye abought
(And alway moſt this Diomede) he ſought

And oft tyme (I fynde) that they mette
With bloody ſtrokes, and with wordes great
Aſſayeng howe her ſpeares were whete
And god it wote, with many a cruel heate
Gan Troylus vpon hys helme to beate
But natheleſſe, fortune it naught ne wolde
Of outher honde that outher dyen ſholde

And if I had ytaken for to write
The armes of this yſe worthy man
Than wolde I of hys bataylles endyte
And for that I to wryten firſt began
Of his loue, I haue ſayd as I can
Hys worthy dedes, who ſo lyſte hem here
Rede Dares, he can tel hem al yfere

Beſeching euery lady bryght of herte
And euery gentyl woman, what ſhe be
Al be it that Creſeyde was vntrewe
That for that gilte ye be nat wroth with me
Ye may her gylte in other bokes ſe
And gladder I wolde wryte, if yow leſt
Penelopes trouthe, and good Alceſte

Ne ſay I nat this al only for theſe men
But moſte for women that betrayed be
Through falſe folke, god yeue hem ſorow ame
That with her great witte and ſubtylte
Betrayen you, and this meueth me
To ſpeke, and in effecte you al I pray
Beth ware of men, & herkeneth what I ſay

Go lytel booke, go my lytel tragedye
There god thy maker yet er that I dye
So ſende me might to make ſome comedye
But lytel boke, make thou none enuye
But ſubiect ben vnto al poeſye
And kiſſe the ſteppes, wher as thou ſeeſt pace
Of vergil, Ouyde, Homer, Lucan, & Stace

And for there is ſo greate diuerſyte
In engliſhe, and in writyng of our tonge
So pray I to god, that none miſwrite the
Ne the miſſe metre, for defaute of tonge
And redde where ſo thou be, or elis ſonge
That thou be vnderſtonde, god I beſeche
But yet to purpoſe of my rather ſpeche

The wrathe, as I began you for to ſey
Of Troylus, the grekes boughten dere
For thouſandes hys hondes maden dey
As he that was withouten any pere
Saue in his tyme Hector as I can here
But welaway, ſaue onely goddes wyl
Diſpitously hym ſlough the fierſe Achil

And when that he was ſlayn in this manere
His lyght goſte, ful blyſſfully is went
Up to the holownelle of the ſeuenth ſphere
In his place lerning euerych element
And there he ſawe, with ful auyſement
The erratyke ſterres, herkenyng armonye
With ſownes ful of heuynelle melodye

And downe from thence, faſte he gan auyſe
This lytel ſpotte of erth, that with the ſee
Enbraced is, and fully gan diſpyſe
This wretched worlde, and helde al vanite
To reſpecte of the playne felicyte
That is in heuen aboue, and at the laſte
There he was ſlaine, his loking down he caſt

And in him ſelfe he lough, right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his dethe ſo faſte
And dampned al our werkes ỹ folweth ſo
The blynde luſte, whiche that may nat laſte
And ſhulden al our herte on heuen caſte
And forthe he wente, shortely for to tel
There as Mercurye ſorted hym to dwel

Suche fyne hath ſo, this Troylus for loue
Suche fyne hath al his gret worthyneſſe
Suche fyne hath his eſtate royal aboue
Such fyne his luſt, ſuch fine hath his nobleſſe
Suche fyne hath falſe worldes brotelneſſe
And thus began hys louyng of Creſeyde
As I haue tolde, and in this wyſe he deyde

O yonge freſhe folkes, he or ſhe
In whiche ỹ loue vp groweth with your age
Repayre eth home from worldely vanyte
And of your herres, vp caſteth the viſage
To thylke god, that after his ymage
You made, and thynketh al nys but a fayre
This worlde ỹ paſſeth ſone, as floures fayre

And

And louerly hym, the whiche ȝ right for loue
Upon a croſſe our ſoules for to bey
Firſt ſtarte and roſe, and ſit in heuen aboue
For he nyl falſen no wight dare I ley
That wol his herte al holly on him ley
And ſens he beſt to loue is, and moſte mede
Who ſerueth fayned loues for to lede

Lo here of paynems, curſed olde rytes
Lo here what al her goddes may auayle
Lo here this wrtched worldes appetites
Lo here the fyne and guerdon for trauayle
Of Ioue, Apollo, of Mars, & ſuch raſkayle
Lo here the forme of olde clerkes ſpeche
In poetrye, if ye her bokes ſeche

O moral Gower, this boke I directe
To the, and to the philoſophical Strode
To vouchſafe there nede is to correcte
Of your benignitees and zeles goode
And to ȝ ſothfaſt Crift that ſtarfe on roode
With al myne herte, of mercy euer I pray
And to the lorde aright, thus I ſpeke & ſay

Thou one, two, and thre, eterne on lyue
That raygneſt aye in thre, two, and one
Uncircumſcript; and al mayſt circumſcryue
Us from vifible and inuiſible fone
Defende, and to thy mercy euerychone
So make vs Jeſus to thy mercy digne
For loue of mayde, and mother thyn benigne.

¶ Thus endeth the fyfth booke, and laſte of Troylus: and here foloweth the pyteful and dolorous teſtament of fayre Creſeyde.

)o(

¶ The teſtament of Creſeyde

BOly ſeaſon thyll a careful dyte
Should corefly onde, and be equinolent
Right ſo it was whan I began to write
This tragedy, the weder right fermeut
Whan Aries in middes of the lent
Showres of hayle can fro the north diſcende
That ſcantly fro the cold I might me defende

Yet nenertheles within myne oratore
I ſtode, whan Titan had his beames bright
Withdra wen downe, and feyled vnder eare
And fayre Uenus the beaute of the nyght
Uprayſe, and ſette vnto the weſte ful rygt
Her golden face in oppoſite wone
Of god Phebus direcre diſcendyng downe

Thrzouzous ȝ glaſſe her beames blaſt ſo fayre
That I myght ſe on euery ſyde me by
The northren wynde had purified the ayre
And ſhedde his myſty cloudes fro the ſkye
The froſte freſed, the blaſtes bytterly
Fro poole Arthe come whiſſing loud & ſhyl
And cauſed me remoue ayenſt my wyl

For I truſted that Uenus loues queue
To whom ſomtyme I bight obedience
My faded herte of loue ſhe wold make grene
And therupon with humble reuerence
I thought to pray her hye magnificence
But for great colde as than I letted was
And in my chambre to the fyre can pas

Though loue be hote, yet in a man of age
It kyndleth nat ſo ſoone as in youtheed
Of whom the blode is flowyng in his rage
And in the olde, the corage dul and deed
Of whiche the fyre outwarde is beſt remued
To helpe by phiſike wher that nature fayleth
I am expert, for bothe I haue aſſayled

I made the fyre and braked me aboute
Whan tolde I bade my ſpirites to comforte
And armed me wel fro the colde theroute
To write the ſorowful teſtament I make it ſhorte
I toke a penne, and lefte al other ſporte
Wryten by worthy Chaucer glorious
Of fayre Creſeyde, and lufty Troylus

And there I founde after that Diomede
Receyued had that lady bright of hewe
How Troylus neer out of his wytte abrede
And wept ſore, with viſage pale of hewe
For which wanhope hys teares gan renewe
While eſperus recoyſed hym agayne
Thus while in ioy he liued, & while in payne

Of her behelt he had greate comforting
Truſting to Troy ȝ ſhe wolde make retour

wchiche he desired moste, of al erthly thing
For why she was his onely paramour
But whan he sawe passed both day & hour
Of her gayncome, in sorowe can oppresse
His woful herte, in care and heuynesse

Of this distresse me nedeth nat reherse
For worthy Chaucer in that same boke
In goodly termes, and in ioly verse
Compyled hath his cares who wyl loke
To breke my slepe another queare I toke
In which I founde the fatal destyny
Of fayre Creseyde, which ended wore the dy

Who wote if al þ Chaucer wrate was trewe
Nor I wote nat if thys narracion
Be authorysed, or forged of the newe
Of some porte by hys inuencion
Made to reporte the lamentacyon
And wofull ende of this lusti Creseyde
And what distresse she was in or she deyde

Whan Diomede had al hys appetyte
And more fulfylled of thys fayre lady
Upon another strete was al his delyte
And sende to her a libel repudy
And her excluded fro hys company
Than desolate she walked vp and downe
As some men sayne, in þ courte as cõmune

O fayre Creseyde, the floure and a per se
Of Troy & Grece, how were thou fortunate
To chaunge in frythe al thy femynite
And be with fleshly lust so maculate
And go amonge the grekes ryt and late
So gyglotyke, takyng thy foule plesaunce
I haue pyte the shulde fal suche mischaunce

Yet neuertheles, what euer mẽ deme or say
In scornful language of thy brutelnesse
I shal excuse, as ferforthe as I may
Thy womãhed, thy wisedome and fayrnesse
The which fortune hath put to such distresse
As her pleased, & nothyng throngh the gylte
Of the, throngh wicked langage to be spilte

This fayre lady on thys wyse destytute
Of al comforte and consolacyon
Right priuely without felowshyp or refute
Dishevelde, passed out of the towne
Anyle or two vnto a mansyoun
Called ful gay, wher her father Calcas
Which than amõg the grekes dwelling was

Whan her he sawe, the cause he can enquire
Of her cõming, she sayd sighing ful sore
Fro Diomede had gotten hys desyre
He wore wery and wolde of me no more
O Calcas doughter wepe þ nat therfore
Paraventure al cometh for the best
Welcome to me thou art ful dere a gest

This olde Calcas, after the lawe was tho
Was keper of the temple as a preest
In whiche Venus and her sonne Cupydo
Were honoured, and his chambre was nest
To which Creseyde vsed ful ofte to rest
Used to passe, her prayers for to say
Whyle at the lasse vpon a solempne day

As custome was, the people ferre and nere
Before the noone, vnto the temple went
With sacrifyce deuout in their manere
But syl Creseyde heuy in her entent
In to the churche wolde nat her selfe present
For gryuing of the people any demyng
Of her expulse fro Diomede the kyng

But passed in to a secrete oratore
Where she might wepe her woful destyny
Behynde her backe, she closed fast the dore
And on her knees bare fel downe in hye
Upon Venus and Cupyde angerly
She cryed out, and sayd in this wyse
Alas that euer I made you sacrifice

Ye gaue me ones a diuyne responsayle
That I shulde be the floure of loue in Troy
Nowe am I made an vnworthy outwayle
And al in care translated is my ioye
Who shal me gyde, who shal me nowe cõuoy
Sithe I fro Diomede, and noble Troylus
Am clene excluded, as abiect odious

O false Cupide, none is to wyte but thou
And the mother of loue, that blinde goddace
Ye caused me vnderstande alway and trowe
The seede of loue was sowen on my face
And ay grewe grene throuz your sople grace
But now alas, that seede with frost is slayne
And I fro louers lefte and al forlayne

Whan this was sayd, downe in an erraty
Rauyshed in spirite, in a dreame she fel
And by apparaunce herde where she byd lye
Cupyde the kyng tynging a siluer bel
Which men might here fro heuen in to hel

At whose sounde before Cupyde aperes
The seuen planets discending fro their speres

Whiche hath power of al thing generable
To rule and stere by their grete influence
Weder and wynde, and course variable
And first of al Saturne gaue hys sentence
Whiche gaue to Cupyde lytel reuerence
But as a boystus chorle in hys manere
Came crabbedly with austrine loke & chere

His face frounsed, his lere was lyke the lede
His tethe chattred, and sheuered with ỳ chin
Hys eyen drouped hole sonken in his heed
Out at his nose the mildrop fast gan ryn
With lyppes blo, and chekes wane and thyn
The yse ycheis ỳ fro his heer downe honge
Was wonder great, and as a speare as longe

Vtour his belte hys syarre lockes lay
Feltred vnkayre, ouer fret with frostes hoore
His garment and his gate ful gay of gray
His widdred wede fro hi ỳ winde out woore
A boustous bowe with in his honde he bore
Under his gyrdle a fatche of felone flayns
Federed with yse, and headed with hoystayns

Than Jupiter right fayre and amiable
God of the sterres in the firmament
And noryce to al thyng generable
Fro hys father Saturne farre differynt
With burly face, and browes bright & brent
Upon hys heed a garlonde wonders gay
Of floures fayre, as it had ben in May

His hoyre was clere, as cristal was his eyen
As golden wier so glitteryng was his beare
His garment and hys gyte ful gay of grene
With golden lystes gyte on euery geare
A burly brande about his middle he beare
And in his right hand he had a groundē speare
Of his father, the worthe fro vs to bere

Next after hym came Mars the god of ire
Of stryfe, debate, and al discencioun
To chyde and fight, as fierce as any fire
In harde harneise hewmonde & habergioun
And on his haunch a roustly fel fauchoun
And in his hande he had a roustly swerde
Wrythyng his face, with many angry worde

Shakyng his blade, before Cupyde he come
With reed visage, & grysly glowyng eyen
And at his mouthe a blubber stode of fome
Lyke to a bore, whetteryng his tuskes kene
Right tulsure lyke, but temperaunce in tene
In horne blew with many boustous bragge
Whiche al this worlde wold make hym agaste (to wagge

Than faire Phebus, lanterne & lāpe of light
Of man & beest, both fruite and floryshyng
Tender norice, and banisher of nyght
And of the worlde, causyng by his moeuing
And influence, lyfe in al erthly thyng
Without cōfort of whom of force to noute
Must go dye, ỳ al this worlde hath wrought

As kyng royal, he rode vpon a chere
The which Phiton somtyme gyded ful right
The brightnesse of his face whā it was bare
Non might beholde, for perfyng of his sight
This golden carte with fyry beames bright
Foure yoked steedes ful different of hewe
But doyte or tiryng throughe the spere shewe

The first was soude, with mane as reed as rose
Called Eoye in to the orient
The seconde stede to name, right Ethios
Whitely and pale, and somdele ascendent
The thirde Perose, right hote & eke feruent
The fourthe he was blacke, called Philologe
Which rollerh Phebus downe in to the se

Venus was there present, that goddes gay
Her sonnes quarel to defende and make
His owne complaynte, cladde in a nice aray
The one halfe grene, shorter half sable blake
White heer as gold, kembed and shede abake
But in her face semed great barraunce
Wylle parfite truth, & wilnes inconstaunce

Under lurking she was dissymulate
Pronosticatyue with blynkes amorous
And sodaynly chaunged and alterate
Angry, as any serpent venomous
Right pungityue with wordes odious
Thus variaunt she was who lyste take kepe
With one eye laugh, & with the other wepe

In tokening that al fleshely paramount
Which Venus hath in rule and gouernaūce
Is somtyme swete, somtyme bitter & sour
Right vnstable and ful of variaunce
Winged with careful ioye & false plesaūce
Now hote now colde, now blith, now ful of woe
Now grene as lefe, now widred & ago (wery

with bokes in hand, than come Mercurius
Ryght eloquent and ful of rethoryke
With polyte termes and delycious
With penne and yuke to repoyre al vdyle
Syngyng songes, and synging merely
Hys hode was reed heried a-trour his crown
Lyke tyl a poete of the olde fassown

Boyes he bare with fyne electuares
And sugred sirupes for digestyon
Spices belongyng to the potiquares
With many holsome swete confection
Doctor in phisyke clodde in a scarlet gown
And furred wel as suche one oughte to be
Honest and good, and nat a woode couth lyte

Next after hym come lady Synthia
The laste of al, and lowyest in her spere
Of colour blake, busked with hornes twa
And in the myght she lysteth best tapere
Hawe as the leed, of colour nothyng clere
For al the lyght she boroweth at her brother
Titan, for of her selfe she hath none other

Her gyte was gray and ful of spottes blake
And on her brest a chorle paynted ful euen
Beryng a bushe of thornes on hys bake
Which for his theft myzt clime no ner ꝑ heuē
Thus whē they gadred were ꝑ goddes seuē
Mercurius they chose d with one a.. nt
To be forespeker in the parlyment

Who had ben there and lyking for to here
His facunde tongue, and termes eloquente
Of rethorike the practyke he myght lere
In breue sermon, a praignant sentence write
Before Cupyde vailing hys cappe a lyte
Sper is the cause of that vocacioun
And be anone shewde hys entencioun

Lo qō Cupide, who wol blaspheme ꝑ name
Of hys owne god, eyther in worde or dede
To al goddes he dothe bothe losse & shame
And shulde haue bitter paynes to his mede
I say this by yonder wretche Creseyde
The which through me was cōtynue flour of
me & my mother she stately can reproue, loue

Saying of her great infelycite
I was the cause, and my mother Venus
She called a blynde goddes & might nat se
With forsaunder and defame iniurious
Thus her lurying vncleane and lecherous
She wolde retorte in me and my mother
To whō I shewde my grace aboue al other

And sithe ye are al seuen deyscate
Participant of diuyne sapience
This great iniury done to our hye estate
We thike wt paine we shuld make recōpence
Was neuer to goddes done such vyolence
As wel for you as for my selfe I say
Therfore go helpe to reuenge I you pray

Mercuryus to Cupyde gaue answere
And sayd, sir kyng: my counsayle is that ye
Referre you to the hyest planet here
And take to hym the lowest of degree
The payne of Creseyde for to modyfye
As god Saturne with him take Synthia
I am content (qō he) to take they twa

Than thus proceded Saturne & the Moone
When they the mater ryplely had degest
For the dispyte to Cupyde that she had done
And to Venus open and manyfest
In al her lyfe with payne to be oppest
And turment sore, with sickenesse incurable
And to al louers be abhomynable

This doleful sentēce Saturne toke on hande
And passed down wher careful Creseide lay
And on her heed he layde a frosty wande
Than laufully on thys wyse can he say
Thy great fayrenesse, and al thy beauty gay
Thy wanton blode, & eke thy golden herte
Here I exclude fro the for euermerre

I chaunge thy myrthe in to melancoly
Which is the mother of al pensyuenesse
Thy moyster and thy hete, in to colde & dry
Thyn insolence, thy play, & thy wantōnesse
To great disease, thy pompe & thy rychesse
In to mortal nede and great penuryte
Thou suffre shalt, and as a begger dye

O cruel Saturne, frowarde and angry
Harde is thy dome, and to malicious
Of fayre Creseyde, why hast thou no mercy
Whiche was so swete, gentyl, and amorous
Withdrawe thy sentence and be gracious
As ꝑ were neuer, so shewest through thy dede
A wreketul sentence gyuen on Creseyde

Than Synthia, whan Saturne past away
Out of her seate, discended downe blyue

And reed a byl on Creseyde where she lay
Contaynyng this sentence dilfynelyue
Fro heale of body here I the dryfyue
And to thy syckenesse shalbe no recure
But in dolour thy dayes to endure

Thy chrystal eyen mengéd wt blode I make
Thy voice so clere vnpleasaunt hoer and hace
Thy lusty lere ouerspred with spottes blake
And lumpes hawe appering in thy face
Where thou comest eche man shal flye ỳ place
Thus shalt ỳ go beggyng fro house to hous
With cuppe and clapper lyke a lazarous

This dooly dreame, this vgly vysyoun
Brought tyl an ende, Creseyde fro it awoke
And al that courte and conuocatioun
Vanished away, than rose she vp and toke
A polysshed glasse, & her shadowe couth loke
And whan she sawe her vysage so deformate
Ik she in hert were wo, I ne wyte god wate

Wepyng ful sore, lo what it is (qõ she)
With frowarde langage to moue and stere
Our crabbed goddes, and so is sene on me
Wy blaspheming now haue I bought ful dere
Al erthly ioye and myrthe I fet arere
Alas this day, alas this wofull tyde
Whan I began with my goddes to chyde

Be this was sayd, a childe came fro the hall
To warne Creseyde the supper was redy
First knocked at the dore, and efte couth call
Madame, your father biddeth you cõe in hye
He hath marueyle so longe on grofe ye lye
And saith your berdes bethe to long somdele
The goddes wote al your entent ful wele

Qõ she fayre childe, go to my father dere
And pray him come to speke with me anon
And so he dyd, and sayd daughter what chere
Alas (qõ she) father, my myrthe is gon
How so (qõ he) and she can al expon
As I haue told, the vengeaunce, & the wrake
For her trespas, Cupide on her couth take

He loked on her vgly lepers face
The whiche before was white as lely flour
Wryngyng his handes, oft tymes sayd alace
That he had lyued to se that wofull hour
For he knewe wel that there was no socour
To her sycknesse, and that dowbled his payne
Thus was ther care ynow betwix hẽ twaine

Whan they togyder mourned had full long
Qõ Creseyde, father I wold nat be sene
Therfore in secret wyse ye let me gange
To yon hospital at the townes ende
And thider some meate for charite me sende
To lyue vpon, for al myrthe in this erthe
Is fro me gone, suche is my wicked werthe

Whan in a mantyl, and a Beuer hat
With cuppe and clapper wonder prluely
He opened a secret gate and out therat
Conueyed her, that no man shulde espy
There to a village halfe a myle therby
Delyuered her in at the spyttel house
And dayly sende her part of his almous

Some knew her wel & sõe had no knowlege
Of her, bycause she was so deformate
With byles blake ouerspred in her vysage
And her fayre colour faded and alterate
Yet they presumed for her hye regrate
And syl mournyng she was of noble kynne
With better wyl there they toke her inne

The day passed, and Phebus went to rest
The cloudes blake ouerwhelmed al the skye
God wote if Creseyde were a sorowful gest
Seyng that vncouth face and herborye
But meate or drinke she dressed her to lye
In a darke corner of the house alone
And on this wise wepig she made her mone

Here folowth the complaynt of Creseyde.

Oppe of sorowe forsh into care
Caytife Creseyde now and euermare
Gon is thy ioy and al thy myrthe in erthe
Of al blysfulnesse now art thou blake and bare
There is no salue may helpe thy fare
Fel is thy fortune, wicked is thy werthe
Thy blysse is banysshed and thy bale vnbeth
Under the great god ik I grauen ware
Where mẽ of Grece ne yet of Troy nust herd

Where is thy chambre wantonly be sene
With burly bed and bankers browded bene
Spyces and wyne to thy collacioun
The cuppes al of golde and syluer shene

The

Thy swete meates serued in plates clene
With swery sauce of a good facioun
Thy gay garmentes w many goodly goun
Thy plesaunt laune pynned w golden pene
Al is arere thy great royal renoun

Where is thy gardeyn with thy greces gay
And frethe flowres, which ỳ quene Flozay
Had payred plesaunly in euery pane
Where ỳ were wont full merily in May
To walke, & take the dewe be it was day
And here the merle and mauyse many one
With ladies layze in carollyng to gone
And se the royal tentes in their ray

This leper loge take foz thy goodly bour
And foz thy bed, take nowe a bounch of stro
Foz wayled wyne and meates thou had tho
Take mouled breed, pirate, and syder sour
But cuppe and clapper is al now ago

My clere voice and my courtly carollyng
Is rawhe as roke, ful hidous heer and hace
Deformed is the fygure of my face
To loke on it no people hath lykyng
Sesped in syght, I say with sore sighyng
Lying among the leper folke alas

O ladyes layze of Troy and Grece attende
My freyle foztune, myne infelycite
My great mischefe which no mã can amende
And in your mynde a myzrour make of me
As I am nowe parauenture that ye
For al your mizt may come to ỳ same ende
Or ris worse if any worse may be
Beware ther foze approches nere your ende

Nought is your fairnesse but a fadyng flour
Nought is your famous laude & hye honour
But wynde inflate in other mennes eares
Your rosyng reed to rotyng shal retour
Example make of me in your memore
Which of such thiges, wofull witnes beares
Al wrieth in erthe, as wynde away it weares
Beware therfoze approchethnere your hour

Thus chidyng with her dzery desteny
Wepyng, she woke the night fro ende to ende
But al in vayne her voice, her careful cry
Wyght not remedy, ne yet her mournig mẽde
Ileper lady rose, and to her wende
And sayd, why spurnes ỳ agayne the wall
To lest thy selfe, and mende nothyng at all
With that thy wepyng but doubleth thy wo
I counsayle the make vertue of a nede
Go lerne to clappe thy clapper to and fro
And lerne after the lawe of lepers lede
There was no bote but forthw thã she yede
Fro place to place, whyle colde & hunger soze
Compelled her to be a ranke beggoze

That same tyme of Troy the garnysoun
Which had the chekmate worthy Troylus
Thzouz leoperdy of warre had stryken down
Knyghtes of Grece in nombze marueylous
With great tryumphe, and laude victozious
Agayne to Troy right royally they rode
The way where Creseyde w the leper stode

Seyng that company come all with a steuyn
They gaue a cryc, & shoke cuppes good spede
Worthy lozdes, foz goddes loue of heuyn
To vs leper, part of your almesse dede
Than to her cry noble Troylus tooke hede
Hauyng pyte, nere by the place gan pas
Wher Creseyde sat, nat wetig what she was

Than vpon him she kest vp bothe her eyen
And w a blynke it come in tyl his thought
That he somtyme her face before had seyn
But she was in such pyte he knew her nought
Yet than her loke into his mynde he brought
The swete visage, and amozous blenkyng
Of fayre Creseyde, sometyme his own derlyng

No wonder was, suppose in mynde that he
Toke her fygure so soone, and lo now why
The vdol of a thyng in case may be
So depe enpzynted in the fantasy
That it deludeth the wyttes outwardly
And so appereth in fozme and lyke estate
Within the mynde, as it was fygurate

A sparke of loue thã tyl his hert couth spzig
And kyndeled his body in a fyze
With hote feuer, in swette, and trymblyng
Him toke, whyle he was redy to exspire
To beare his shylde his brest begon to tyze
Within a whyle he chaunged many a he we
And neuertheles nat one another knewe

Foz knightly pyte and memoziel
Of fayre Creseyde, a gyrdel gan he take
A purse of golde, & many a gay iewel
And in the skyrte of Creseyde down can shake
Than rode away, & nat a wozde he spake

gentyle in hert whyle he came to the towne
And for great care ofte tyth almoſt fel downe

The lepre folke to Creseyde than courth drawe
To ſe the equal diſtrybucioun
Of ỹ almous, but whan the golde they ſawe
Ethe one to other priuely can rown
And ſayd, yon lorde hath more affectioun
Howe euer it be, vnto you lazarous
Than to vs al, we know by his almous

What lorde is yon (qō ſhe) haue ye no feleꝛ
That doth to vs ſo great humanite
Yes qō a lepre man, I knowe him wele
Sir Troylus it is, a knyght gentyl & free
Whan Creseyde vnderſtode that it was he
Styffer than ſtele ther ſterte a bytter ſtoūde
Throughout her hert, & fyl down to ỹ groūd

Whan ſhe ouercome wt ſighyng ſore & ſadde
With many a carefull crye and colde atone
Now is my breſt with ſtormy ſtoūdes ſtadde
Wrapped in wo wretch ful wyl of one
Thus fel in ſwoun full ofte or ſhe wold gone
And euer in her ſwounyng cryed ſhe thus
O falſe Creseyde, & trewe knyght Troylus

Thy loue, thy laude, and al thy gentylneſſe
I compted ſmal in my proſperite
So eſſated I was in wantonneſſe
And clambe vpon the fyckell whele ſo hye
Al fayth and loue I promytted to the
Was in thy ſelfe febel and furious
O falſe Creseyde, & trewe knyght Troylus

For loue of me thou kepte countenaunce
Honeſt and chaſt in converſacioun
Of al women protectour and defence
Thou were, and helped their opinioun
My mynde on fleſhely foule affectioun
Was enclyned to luſtes lecherous
Fye falſe Creseyde, o trewe knyght Troylus

Louers beware, and take good hede about
Whom that ye loue, for whā ye ſuffer payne
I let you wyt ther is right fewe throughout
Whō ye may truſt to haue trewe loue agayne
Profyte whā ye wol your labour is in vayne
Therfore I rede ye take them as ye fynde
For they are fad as wedercocke in wynde

Becauſe I know the great vnſtableneſſe
Wyttel as gyſtle, vnto my ſelfe I ſay
Trulyng in other as great ſtabilneſſe
Is inconſtaunce, and as vntrewe of fay
Thouꝛ ſome be trewe, I wot ryght fewe ar they
Who lyndeth truth, let him his lady ruſe
None but my ſelfe as now I woll accuſe

Whā this was ſayd, vp paper ſhe ſat downe
And in this maner made her teſtament
Here I bequeth my corſe and caryoun
With wormes and with toodes to be trut
My cuppe, my clapper, and myne ornament
And al my golde, theſe lepre folke ſhal haue
Whan I am deed, to bury me in graue

This royal ring ſet with this Ruby red
Which Troylus in dowry to me ſende
To him agayne I leaue it whan I am ded
To make my carefull dethe vnto him kende
Thus I conclude ſhortely & make an ende
My ſpirit I leue to Diane wher ſhe dwelleꝛ
To walke with her in waſte wodes & welleꝛ

O Diomede thou haſt both broche & belte
Which Troylus gaue me in tokenyng
Of his trewe loue, & with ỹ worde ſhe ſwelte
And ſoone a leper man toke of the tyng
Than buried her without tarryeng
To Troylus forthwith the tyng he bare
And of Creseyde the dethe he can declare

Whan he had herde her great infyrmite
Her legacy, and lamentacyoun
And howe ſhe ended in ſuche powerte
He ſwelte for wo and fel downe in a ſwoun
For ſorowe his herte to braſt was boun
Sighyng ful ſadly ſayd I can no more
She was vntrewe, and wo is me therfore

Some ſaith he made a tōbe of marble gray
And wrote her name and ſuperſcripcioun
And layde it on her graue where as ſhe lay
In golden letters, cōtaynyng this treſoun
Lo fayre ladyes, Creseyde of Troy the toun
Sometyme compted the flour of womā held
Under this ſtone, late leper lyeth deed

Now worthy women in this balade ſhort
Made for your worſhyp and inſtruccion
Of charite I monyſhe and exhort
Wynge nat your loue with falſe diſception
Beare in your mynde this fore concluſyon
Of fayre Creseyde, as I haue ſayd before
Sith ſhe is deed, I ſpeke of her no more.

Thus

¶ Thus endeth the pyteful and dolorous testament of Cryse Creseyde: & here foloweth the legende of good women.

¶ The legende of good women

Thousande tymes I haue herde men tell
That there is ioye in heuen and payne in hell
And I accorde it wele þ it is so
But natheles yet wot I wele also
That there ays non dwellyng in this cõtre
That eyther hath in heuen or in hel yde
Ne may of it none other wayes wyten
But as he herde sayd, or founde it wryten
For by assaye there may no man it preue
But god forbede, but men shulde leue
Wel more thyng thã they han sene with eye
Wen thal nat wenen euery thyng a lye
But if him selfe it seeth, or elis it dothe
For god wote thyng is neuer the lesse sothe
Though euery wight ne may it not ysee
Bernarde the Monke ne saugh al parde
Than mote we to bokes that we fynde
(Through which þ olde thinges ben i mynde
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse)
Yeue credence, in euery skylful wyse
That tellen of these olde approued stories
Of holynes, of regnes, of victories
Of loue, of hate, and other sondry thynges
Of which I may not make rehersynges
And if that olde bokes were away
Yloste were of remembraunce the key
Wel ought vs than, honouren & beleue
These bokes, there we han none other preue
And as for me, though þ I can but lyte
On bokes for to rede I me delyte
And to hem yeue I feyth and ful credence
And in myne herte haue hem in reuerence
So hertely, that there is game none
That fro my bookes maketh me to gone
But it be seldome on the holy day
Saue certaynly, whan þ the month of May
Is comen, and that I here the foules synge
And that the floures gynnen for to spryngе
Farwel my boke, and my deuotion
Nowe haue I than eke this condicion
That of al the floures in the meede
Than loue I most these floures white & reed
Such þ men callen Daysies in our toun
To hem haue I so great affection
As I sayd erst, when comen is the May
That in my bedde there dawith me no day
That I nam vp, and walkyng in the mede
To seen this floure ayenst the sunne sprede
Whan it vp riseth early by the morowe
That blysful syght softeneth al my sorowe
So glad am I, whan that I haue presence
Of it, to done it al reuerence
As the that is of al floures floure
Fulfylled of all vertue and honoure
And euer ylyke fayre, and freshe of hewe
And euer I loue it, and euer ylyke newe
And euer shal, tyl that myne herte dye
Al floute I not of thys, I wol not lye
There loued no wight hotter in his lyue
And whan that it is eue I renne blythe
Asone as euer the sunne gynneth west
To seen this flour, how it wol go to rest
For feare of nyght, so hateth she derknesse
Her chere is playnly spred in the brightnesse
Of the sunne, for there it wol vnclose
Alas that I ne had Englysh, ryme, or prose
Suffysaunt, this floure to preyse aright
But helpeth ye, that han connynge and might
Ye louers that can make of sentement
In this case ought ye be dilygent
To forthren me somwhat in my labour
Whether ye ben with the lefe or with þ flour
For wel I wote, that ye han here before
Of makyng, ropen, and lad away the ore
And I come after, gleenyng here and there
And am ful glad, if I may fynde an ere
Of any goodly word that ye han lefte
And though it happen me to rehersen efte
That ye han in your freshe songes sayde
Forbereth me, and bereth nat yuel apayde
Sithe that ye se, I do it in the honour
Of Loue: and eke in seruyce of the flour
Whom that I serue, as I haue wit or myght
She is the clerenesse and the very lyght
That in this derke worlde me wynt a leadeth
The hert, whin my sorowful brest you dredeth
And loueth so sore, þ ye ben verily
The maistres of my wyt, and nothyng I
My word, my werkes, is knit soin your bõ
That as an harpe obeyeth to ye honde (de

And make it sowne after his tyngeryng
Right so mowe ye out of myne hert bring
Such voice, right as you list, to laugh or payne
Be ye my gyde, and lady soueraygne
As to myne erthly god, to you I call
Bothe in this werke, and my sorowes all
But wherfore that I spake to yeue credence
To olde storyes, and done hem reuerence
And that men mosten more thing bylieue
Than men may seue at eye, or els preue
That shal I seyne, whan that I se my tyme
I may nat al atones speke in tyme
Thy bely goost, that thurlleth al way newe
To seme this flour so yonge, so freshe of hewe
Constrayned me, with so gredy desyre
That in myne hert I felt yet the fyre
That made me to ryse er it were day
And this was now the first morowe of May
With dredeful hert, and glad deuocion
For to ben at the resurrection
Of this floure, whan that it shulde vnclose
Ageyne the sunne, that rose as reed as rose
That in the brest was of the best that day
That Augenores doughter had away
And downe on knees anon right I me sette
And as I couthe, this freshe flour I grette
Kneling alway, til it vnclosed was
Upon the smal, softe, swete gras
That was with floures swete embrouded al
Of suche swetnesse, and suche odour ouer al
That for to speke of gōme, herbe, or tre
Comparyson may none vmaked be
For it surmounteth plainly al odoures
And of sythe beaute of floures
Forgotten had the erthe his pore estate
Of wynter, that him naked made and mate
And with his sworde of colde so sore greued
Now hath the atempre sonne all that releued
That naked was, and clad it newe agayne
The smal foules, of the seson fayne
That of the panter and the nette ben scaped
Upon the fouler, that hem made awhaped
In wynter, and distroyed had her brood
In his despite him thought it did him good
To synge of him, and in her songe despyse
The foule chorle, that for his coueityse
Had hem betrayed, with his sophistrye
This was her songe: The fouler we defye
And al his crafte, and some songen clere
Layes of loue, that ioye it was to here
In worshipping and praysyng of her make
And for the newe blysful somers sake
Upon the braunches ful of blosmes softe
In her delyte, they turned hem ful ofte
And songen, blyssed be saynt Valentyne
For on his day I chese you to be myne
Withouten repentyng, myne hert swete
And ther withal her beckes gonnen mete
Yeldyng honour, and humble obeysaunce
To loue, and bydden her ordre obseruaunce
That longeth vnto loue, and vnto nature
Constrewe ỹ as you lyst, I do no cure
And tho that had done vnkyndenesse
As dothe the Tydife, for newe straungenesse
Besought mercy of her trespasyng
And humbly songe her repentyng
And sworen on the blosmes to be trewe
So that her makes wolde vpon hem rewe
And at the last maden her acorde
Al founde they Daūger for the tyme a lorde
Yet pyte, through his stronge gentyl myght
Forgaue, and made mercy passen ryght
Through innocence, and ruled curtesye
But I ne cleape it nat innocence folye
Ne falsе pyte, for vertue is the meane
As Ethyke sayth, in suche maner I meane
And thus these foules, voyde of al malyce
Acorden to loue, and laften vyce
Of hate, and songe al of one acorde
Welcome sōmer, our governour and lorde
And zephirus, and Flora gentelly
Yaue to the floures softe and tenderly
Her swote brethe, that made hem for to sprede
As god and goddesse of the flowry mede
In whiche me thoughte I might day by day
Dwellen alway, the holy monthe of May
Withouten slepe, withouten mete or drynke
Adowne ful softly I gan to synke
And leanyng on myn elbowe and my syde
The longe day I shope me for to abyde
For nothyng els, and I shal nat lye
But for to loke vpon the dayesye
That wel by reason men it call may
The dayesy, or els the eye of the day
The emprice, and floure of floures all
I pray to god that fayre mote she fall
And al that louen floures, for her sake
But natheles, ne wene nat that I make
In prayesyng of the floure agayne the lefe
Nomore than of the corne agayne the sheef
For as to me nys leuer none ne lother
I nam with holden yet with neuer nother
Ne I not who serueth lefe, ne who the floure
Wel brouken they her seruyce or labour
For this thyng is al of another tonne
Of olde story, er suche thyng was begonne

Thus

Whan that the sonne out ỳ south gan west
And that this floure gan close, & gan to rest
For derknes of the night, ỳ which he dredde
Home to myn house ful swiftly I me spedde
To gon to rest, and erly for to rise
To sene this flour to spredde, as I deuise
And in a lytel herber that I haue
That benched was on turues freshe ygraue
I bad men shulde me my couche make
For deynte of the newe sommers sake
I bad hem strawen floures on my bedde
Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hedde
I fel a slepe, and slepte an hour or two
Me mette howe I lay in the medowe tho
To sene this floure, that I love so & drede
And from a ferre came walkyng in the mede
The god of Loue, and in his hande a quene
And she was clad in royal habyte grene
A fret of golde she had next her heere
And vpon that a white crowne she beere
With floroums smal, and I shal nat lye
For al the worlde ryght as a dayesye
Ycrowned is, with white leaues lyte
So were the floroums of her crowne whyte
For of o perle fyne oriental
Her whyte crowne was ymaked al
For which the white crown, aboue the grene
Made her lyke a dayesye for to seme
Considred eke her fret of golde aboue
Clothed was this mighty god of Loue
In fyne embrouded, ful of grene greues
In whiche a fret of red rose leues
The freshest sens the worlde was first begō
His gyte herre was crowned with a son
In stede of golde, for heuynesse and weight
Therwith me thought his face shone so bright
That wel vnnethes myght I hym beholde
And in his hāde, me thought I sawe hym holde
Two fyry dartes, as the gledes rede
And angelyke his wynges sawe I spredde
And al be that men sayne, that blynde is he
Algate me thought that he myght se
For stedely on me he gan beholde
So that his lokyng doth myn herte colde
And by the hande he held this noble quene
Crowned with white, & clothed al in grene
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke
That in this worlde though ỳ mē wold seke
Half her beaute shulde they not fynde
In creature that formed is by kynde
And therfore may I sayn as thynketh me
This songe in praysyng of this lady fre.

Hyde Absolon thy gylte tresses clere
Hester lay thou thy meknesse al adoun
Hyde Jonathas al thy frendly manere
Penelopee, and Marcia Catoun
Make of your wyfehode no comparisoun
Hyde your beauties, Isoude & Helayne
My lady cometh, that al this may disdayne

Thy fayre body let it not apere
Lauyne, and thou Lucrece of Rome toun
And Polixene, that boughten loue so dere
And Cleopatras, with al thy passyoun
Hyde your trouthe of loue, & your renoun
And thou Tisbe, that hast of loue such payne
My lady cometh, that al this may disdayne

Hero, Dido, Laodomia, al yfere
And Phillis, hangyng for Demophoun
And Canace, espyed by thy chere
Hipsipyle bytrayed with Jasoun
Maketh of your trouth neither bost ne soun
Nor Hypermistre, or Ariadne, ye twayne
My lady cometh, that al this may disdayne.

¶ This balade may ful wel ysonge be
As I haue sayde erste, by my lady fre
For certaynly, al these mowe nat suffyce
To apperen with my lady in no wyse
For as the sonne wol the fyre disdayne
So passeth al my lady sourrayne
That is so good, so fayre, so debonayre
I pray to god that euer fal her fayre
For nad comforte ben of her presence
I had ben dede, withouten any defence
For dredē of Lones wordes, and hys chere
As whan tyme is hereafter ye shal here
Behynde this god of Loue vpon the grene
I sawe comyng of ladyes nyntene
In royal habit, a ful easy pace
And after hem came of women suche a trace
That sens that god Adam had made of erth
The thirde parte of mankynde, or the ferthe
Ne wende I nat by possybylyte
Had euer in thys wyde worlde ybe
And trewe of loue, these women were echon
Nowe whether was ỳ a wōder thing or non
That tyght anon, as that they gonne espye
This floure, whiche that I clepe the dayesye
Ful sodaynly they stynten al at ones
And kneled downe, as it were for the nones
And songen with o voyce, heale and honour
To trouth of woman heed, and to this flour
That beareth our alder prise in figurynge

Her whyte crowne he areth the witnessyng
And with that worde, acompas enuyroun
They sitten hem ful softly adown
First sate the god of Loue, & sithe his quene
With the white crowne, clad al in grene
And sythen al the remnaunt by and by
As they were of estate, ful curtesly
Ne nat a worde was spoken in the place
The mountenaūce of a furlonge way of space
I kneling by this floure, in good entente
Abode to knowen what this people mente
As styl as any stone, tyl at the laste
This god of Loue, on me his eyen caste
And sayd, who kneleth ther: and I answerde
Unto hys askyng, whan that I it herde
And sayd, sir it am I, and come hym nere
And salued him, (qd he) what doest thou here
So nigh myn owne floure, so boldely
It were better worthy for me
A worme to nighen nere my floure than thou
And why sir (qd I) and it lyke your
For thou (qd he) art therto nothyng able
It is my reyke, digne and delytable
And thou my foe, & al my folke werreyest
And of myn olde seruauntes thou missayest
And hyndrest hem, with thy translacion
And letrest folke from her deuocion
To serue me, and holdest it folye
To serue Loue, thou mayst it nat denye
For in playne text, withouten nede of glose
Thou hast translated the Romaūt of ꝑ Rose
That is an heresye ayenst my lawe
And makest wyse folke fro me withdrawe
And of Creseyde, thou hast sayde as the lyste
That maketh men to women lesse treste
That ben as trewe as euer was any stele
Of thyn answere anyst the ryght wele
For though thou rymed hast my lay
As other wrecches haue done many a day
By seynt Venus, that my mother is
If that thou line, thou shalt repenten this
So cruelly, that it shal wel be sene
Tho spake this lady, clothed al in grene
And sayd, god right of your curtesye
Ye mote beteken if he can replye
Ayenst al this, that ye haue to hym meued
A god ne shulde nat be thus agreued
But of his benite he shal be stable
And therto gracious and mercyable
And if ye were a god, that knowen al
Than might it be, as I you tellen shal
This man to you may falsely ben accused
That as by right, him ought ben excused
For in your courte is many a losengeour
And many a queynte totoler accusour
That tabouren in your eares many a soun
Right after her ymaginacioun
To haue your bealyaunce, and for enuy
These ben the causes, and I shal nat lye
Enuye is lauender of the court alway
For she ne parteth neither night ne day
Out of the house of Cesar, thus saith Dant
Who so that gothe algate she wol nat want
And eke peraunter for this man is ryer
He might done it, gessyng no malyce
But for he vseth thynges for to make
Him recketh nought of what mater he take
Or him was boden make thilke twey
Of some persone, and durst it nat withsey
Or hym repenteth bterly of thyt
He ne hath nat done so grieuously amis
To translaten that olde clerkes writen
As though that he of malyce wolde enditen
Dispite of loue, & had hym self it wrought
This shuld a rightwise lord haue i his thought
And nat be like straungers of Lombardy
That han no rewarde but at tyranny
For he that kyng or lorde is naturel
Him ought nat be tyraunt ne cruel
As is a fermour, to done the harme he can
He must thynke it is hys liege man
And is his tresour, and his golde in cofer
This is the sentence of the ꝑhilosopher
A kynge to kepe hys lieges in justyce
Withouten doute that is hys office
Al wol he kepe hys lordes in her degre
As it is right and skyl, that they be
Enhaunsed & honoured, and moste dere
For they dē halfe goddes in this world here
Yet mote he done both right to poore & ryche
Al be that her estate be nat both lyche
And haue of poore folke compassyon
For lo, the gentyl kynde of the lyon
For whan a flye offendeth hym or byteth
He with his tayle away the flye smiteth
Al easely, for of his gentrye
Hym deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye
As dothe a curre, or els another beest
In noble corage ought ben arrest
And wayen euery thyng by equite
And euer haue regarde vnto his owne degre
For sir, it is no maystrye for a lorde
To dampne a mā, without answere of worde
And for a lorde, that is ful foule to vse
And if so be, he may hym nat excuse
But asketh mercy with a dredeful herte

And

And profereth hym, right in his bare sherte
To den right at your owne iugement
Than ought a god by shorte auisement
Consider hys owne honour, and his trespace
For syth no cause of deth lyth in this cace
You ought to den the lyghtyer merciable
Leneth your ire, & bethe somwhat treatable
The man hath serued you of his conninges
And forthred wel your law in his makinges
Al be it that he can nat wel endyte
Yet hath he made leude folke delyte
To serue you, in preysyng of your name
He made the boke, þ̄ hight the house of fame
And eke the deth of Blaunche the duchesse
And the Parliament of Foules, as I gesse
And al the loue of Palamon and Arcyte
Of Thebes, though þ̄ storie is knowen lyte
And many an hympne, for your holy dayes
That highten balades, rondels, virelayes
And for to speke of other holynesse
He hath in prose translated Boece
And made the lyfe also of saynt Cecile
He made also, gone is a great whyle
Origines vpon the Maudelayne
Him ought nowe to haue the lesse payne
He hath made many a ley, and many a thyng
Nowe as ye be a god, and eke a kyng
I your Alceste, whilom quene of Trace
I aske you this man right of your grace
That ye hym neuer hurte in al hys lyue
And he shal sweare to you, and that bilyue
He shal neuer more agyten in thys wyse
But shal maken as ye wol deuyse
Of women trewe in louyng al her lyfe
Where so ye wol, of mayden or of wyfe
And forthren you, as muche as he misseyde
Or in the Rose, or els in Creseyde
The god of Loue answerde her thus anon
Madame (qō he) it is so longe agon
That I you knewe, so charytable and trewe
That neuer yet, sens the worlde was newe
To me ne founde I better none than ye
If that I wol saue my degree
I may nor wol nat werne your requeste
Al lyeth in you, doth with hym as you leste
Al forgeue without en lenger space
For who so geueth a yefte or doth a grace
Do it betyme, his thanke shal be the more
And demeth ye what he shal do therfore
Go thanke nowe my lady here (qō he)
I rose, and downe I set me on my knee
And sayd thus: Madame, the god aboue
For yelde you that the god of Loue
Haue maked me hys werre to forgeue
And grace so longe for to lyue
That I may knowe sothely what ye be
That haue me holpen, and put in this degre
But trewely I wende, as in thys caas
Nought haue a gilte, ne done to loue trespas
For why, a trewe man without en drede
Hath nat to parten with a theues dede
Ne a trewe louer ought me nat to blame
Though þ̄ I speke a false louer some shame
They ought rather with me for to holde
For that I of Creseyde wrote or tolde
Or of the Rose, what to myne authorment
Algate god wotte it was myn entent
To forthren trouth in loue, and it cherysse
And to den ware fro falsenesse and fro vyce
By whiche ensample, this was my mening
And she answerde, let be thyne arguyng
For loue ne wol not counterpleted be
In right ne wronge, and lerne that of me
Thou hast thy grace, & holde the right therto
Now wol I sayn what penaunce þ̄ shalt do
For thy trespace, vnderstande it here
Thou shalt while þ̄ thou lyuest yere by yere
The moste partie of thy tyme spende
In makyng of a glorious legende
Of good women, maydens, and wyues
That weren trewe in louyng al her lyues
And tel of false men that hem betrayen
That al her lyfe ne do nat but assayen
Howe many women they may done a shame
For in your worlde that is now holde a game
And though the lyke nat a louer be
Speke wel of loue, this penaunce yeue I the
And to the god of loue I shal so praye
That he shal charge his seruāts by any way
To forthren the, and wel thy labour quite
Go now thy way, this penaunce is but lyte
And whē this boke is made, yeue it þ̄ quene
On my behalfe, at Eltham, or at Shene
The god of loue gan smyle, & than he sayde
Wost þ̄ (qō he) wher this be wyfe or mayde
Or quene, or countesse, or of what degre
That hath so lytel penaunce yeuen the
That hast deserued sore for to smerte
But pyte renneth sone in gentle herte
That mayst þ̄ sene, she kytheth what she is
And I answerde, nay sir so haue I blis
No more, but that I se wel she is good
That is a trewe tale by myn hoode
(Qō Loue) and thou knowest wel parde
If it be so that thou auyse the
Haste thou nat in a boke in thy cheste

The great goodnesse of the quene Alceste
That ruthed was in to a dayesye
She that for her husbonde chese to dye
And eke to gone to hel, rather than he
And Hercules rescued her parde
And brought her out of hel agayne to blys
And I answerde agayne, and sayd yes
Nowe knowe I her, as is thys good Alceste
The dayesye, and myn owne hertes reste
Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wife
That both after her deth, and in her life
Her great bounte doubleth her renoun
Wel hath she quit me myn affectioun
That I haue to her flour the dayesye
No wonder is though Ioue her stellyfye
As telleth Agaton, for her great goodnesse
Her whyte colowne beareth of it witnesse
For also many vertues had she
As smal flowrons in her colowne be
In remembraunce of her, and in honour
Cibylla made the dayesye and the floure
Icrowned al with whyte, as men may se
And Mars yaue to her a colowr red parde
In stede of Rubies set amonge the whyte
Therwith this quene woxe red for shame alite
Whan she was prayed so in her presence
Than sayd I, Loue, a ful great negligence
Was it to the, that yike tyme thou made
(Hyde Absolon thy tresses) in balade
That thou forgrete in thy songe to sette
Sith that thou art so greatly in her dette
And wost wel that kalender is she
To any woman, that wol louer be
For she raught al the crafte of trewe louyng
And namely of wyfehode the lyuyng
And al the bondes that she ought kepe
Thy lytel wytte was thylke tyme a slepe
But nowe I charge the vpon thy lyfe
That in thy legende thou make of this wife
Whan thou haste other smale ymade before
And fare nowe wel, I charge the no more
But er I go, thus muche I wol the tel
Ne shal no trewe louer come in hel
These other ladyes sitting here a rowe
Ben in my balade, if thou const hem knowe
And in thy bokes, al thou shalte hem fynde
Haue hem nowe in thy legende al in mynde
I meane of hem that ben in thy knowyng
For here ben twenty thousande mo sitting
Than thou knowest, good women al
And trewe of loue, for ought that may befal
Make the metres of hem as the leste
I moste gone home, the sunne draweth weste
To paradys, with al this compayne
And serue alway the freshe dayesye
And Cleopatras I wol that thou begynne
And so forthe, as my loue so shalt thou wynne
For lest se nowe what man that louer be
Wol done so stronge a payne for loue as she
I wote wel that thou mayst nat al it ryme
That suche louers dyd in her tyme
It were to longe to reden and to here
Suffyseth me thou make in this manere
That thou reherce of al her lyfe the great
After these olde authours listen for to treate
For who so shal so many a storye tel
Sey shortely or he shal to longe dwel
And with that worde my bokes gan I take
And right thus on my legende gan I make.

¶ Thus endeth the prologue.

¶ Here begynneth the legende of Cleopatras Quene of Egypte.

After the dethe of Ptholome the kyng
That al Egypt had in hys gouernyng
Reigned hys Quene Cleopatras
Tyl on a tyme byfel there suche caas
That out of Rome was sent a se[illegible]
For to conqueren realmes and hon[illegible]
Vnto the towne of Rome, as was pleasaunce
To haue the worlde at her obeysaunce
And forthe to say, Antonius was his name
So fyl it, as fortune him ought a shame
Whan he was fallen in prosperite
Rebel vnto the towne of Rome is he
And ouer al thys, the fustet of Cesare
He left her falsely, er that she was ware
And wolde algates han another wyfe
For which he toke with Rome, & Cesar strife
Mathelesse, for for the thys yike Senatour
Was a ful worthy gentyl werryour
And of his deth it was ful great damage
But Ioue had brought this man in such a rage
And him so narowe bounden in hys laas
And al for the loue of Cleopatras
That al the worlde he set at no value
Him thought there was nothing to him so due
As Cleopatras, for to loue and serue
Him thought that in armes for to sterue

In

In the defence of her, and of her ryght
Thys noble quene, ehe loued so this knight
Through hys deserte, and for hys chiualrye
As certaynely, but if that bookes lye
He was of person, and of gentylnesse
And of discretion, and of hardynesse
Worthy to any wyght that lyuen may
And she was fayre, as is the rose in May
And for to maken shorte is the beste
She wore hys wyfe, & had hym as her leste
The weddyng and the feste to deuyse
To me that haue ytake suche emprise
And so many a storye for to make
It were to longe, leste that I shulde slake
Of thyng that beareth more effecte a charge
For men may ouer lade a shyppe or barge
And for thy, to effecte than wol I skyppe
And al the remnaunt, I wol let it slyppe
Octauian, that woode was of this dede
Shope hym an hoaste on Antony to lede
Al openly, for hys distruction
With stoute Romaynes, cruel as lyon
To shyp they went, & thus I let hem sayle
Antonius was ware, and wol nat fayle
To meten with these Romaynes, if he may
Take eke hys rede, and bothe vpon a day
Hys wyfe and he, and al his host forth went
To shyp anone, no lenger they ne stent
And in the see it happed hem to mete
Vp gothe the trumpe, & for to shoute & shete
And paynen hem to set on with the sonne
With grisly sowne out goth the great gonne
And hertely they hurtlen in al at ones
And fro ꝑ top, downe cometh ꝑ great stones
In goth the grapenel so ful of crokes
Amonge the ropes ran the sheryng hokes
In with the polaxe preaseth he and he
Behynde the maste, begynneth he to flye
And out agayne, and driueth him ouer borde
He sticketh hym vpon hys speares orde
He rent the sayle with hokes lyke a sythe
He brigeth the cuppe, & biddeth hem be blithe
He poureth peesen vpon the hatches slyder
And pottes ful of lyme, they gone to gyder
And thus the longe day in fight they spende
Til at the laste, as euery thyng hath ende
Antony is shent, and put him to the flyght
And al his folke to go, that best go might
Fleeth eke ꝑ queue, with al her purple sayle
For strokes, which ꝑ wer as thicke as hayle
No wonder was, he myght it nat endure
And whan that Antony sawe that auenture
Alas (quꝫ he) the day that I was borne
My worshyp in this day thus haue I lorne
And for dispayre, out of his witte he sterte
And rote hym selfe anon throughout ꝑ herte
Er that he ferther went out of the place
His wife, that coulde of Cesar haue no grace
To Egypt is fled, for drede and for distresse
But herkeneth ye that speken of kyndenesse
Ye men that falsely swearen many an othe
That ye wol dye, if that your loue be wrothe
Here may ye sene of women such a trouth
This woful cleopatre hath made such trouth
That there nis tonge none that may it tel
But on the morowe, she wol no lenger dwel
But made her subtel werkmen make a shryne
Of al the rubyes and the stones fyne
In al Egypt, that she couldе ryspe
And put ful the shryne of spicerye
And lette the corse enbaume; & forth she fette
This deed corse, and in the shryne it shette
And next the shryne a pit than doth she graue
And al the serpentes that she myght haue
She put hem in that graue, & thus she seyde
Now loue, to who my sorowful hert obeyde
So ferforthly, that fro that blisful hour
That I you swore, to ben al freely your
I meane you, Antonius my knyght
That neuer wakyng in the day or nyght
Ye nere out of myn hertes remembraunce
For wele or wo, for carole, or for daunce
And in my selfe, this couenaũt made I tho
That right suche as ye felten wele or wo
As ferforth as it in my power laye
Vnreprouable vnto my wyfehode aye
The same wolde I felen, lyfe or dethe
And thilke couenaũt, while me lasteth brethe
I wol fulfyl, and that shal wel be sene
Was neuer vnto her loue a trewer quene
And with ꝑ word, naked with ful good hert
Amonge the serpentes in the pitte she sterte
And there she chese to haue her buryeng
Anone the neders gonne her for to styng
And she her deth receyueth with good chere
For loue of Antony that was her so dere
And this is storial, sothe it is no fable
Nowe er I fynde a man thus trewe & stable
And wol for loue his dethe so freely take
I pray god let our heedes neuer ake.

Here endeth the legende of Cleopatras,
and here foloweth the legende of
Tysbe of Babylone.

T Babilonye whylom
fyl it thus
The whiche towne the
quene Semiramus
Let dichen al about, and
walles make
Ful hye, of harde tyles
wel ybake
There were dwellyng in this noble town
Two lordes, which þ were of great renown
And woned en so nigh vpon a grene
That ther nas but a stoue wal hem betweene
As oft in great townes is the woonne
And sothe to sayne, that one man had a sonne
Of al that londe, ant of the lustyest
That other had a doughter, the fayrest
That estward in þ world was tho dwelling
The name of eneryche, gan to other spring
By women that were neyghbours aboute
For in that countre yet without doute
Mayden s ben yhepte for iclousye
Ful strayte, leste they dydden some folye
This yonge man was cleped Piramus
Tysbe hight the mayde (Naso sayth thus)
And thus by reporte, was her name yshoue
That as they woxe in age, so woxe her loue
And certayne, as by reason of her age
Ther might haue ben betwixt hem mariage
But that her fathers nolde it nat assent
And bothe in loue ylyke sore they brent
That none of al her frendes might it lette
But priuely somtyme yet they mette
By seyght, and spaken some of her desyre
As wyte the glede, and hotter is the fyre
Forbyd a loue, and it is ten tymes so wode
This wal, which þ betwixt hem both stode
Was clouen a two, right fro the top adoun
Of olde tyme, of hys foundacioun
But yet thys clifte was so narowe and lyte
It was nat seue, deere ynough a myte
But what is that, that loue can not espye
Ye louers two, if that I shal nat lye
Ye founden fyrst thys ylyke narowe clifte
And with a sounde, as softe as any shrifte
They let her wordes through the clifte pace
And tolden, while þ they stoden in the place
Al her complaynt of loue, and al her wo
Et euery tyme whan they durste so
On that one syde of the wal stode he
And on that other syde stode Tysbe
The swete so wone of other to receyue
And thus her wardeyns wold they disceyue
And euery day this wal they wolde threte
And wythe to god, that it were do done yhere
Thus wolde they sayne, alas þ wicked wal
Thrugh thyn enuye, thou vs letteſt al
Why nyl thou cleane, or fallen al a two
Or at the leste, but thou woldeſt so
Yet woldeſt thou but ones let vs mete
Or ones that we might kysse (were
Than were we cured of our cares colde
But natheleſſe, yet be we to the holde
In as muche as thou suffreſt for to gone
Our wordes thrugh thy lyme & eke thy stone
Yet ought we to the ben wel apayde
And whan these ydle wordes weren sayde
The colde wal they wolden kysse of stone
And take her leaue, & forth they wolden gone
And this was gladly in the eurnytyde
Or wonder erly, leſt men it espyde
And longe time they wrought in this manere
Tyl on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere
Aurora with the stremes of her here
Had dryed vp the dewe of herbes were
Vnto this cyrte, as it was woune to be
Come Piramus, and after come Tysbe
And plighten trouthe, fully in her fay
That yche same night to stale away
And to begyle her wardeyns eurychone
And forth out of the cite for to gone
And for the feldes ben so brode and wyde
For to mete in o place at o tyde
They set u ches, her meetynges shulde be
There kyng Ninus was grauen, vnder a tre
For olde payenims, that ydolles beryed
Vſeden tho in feldes to ben buried
And faste by his graue was a well
And shortely of this tale for to tell
This couenaunt was affirmed wonder faste
And longe hem thought that the sonne laste
That it nere gone vnder the see adoun
This Tisbe hath so great affectioun
And so great lykyng Piramus to se
That whan she sawe her tyme might be
At myght she stale away ful priuely
With her face ywimpled subtilly
For al her frendes (for to saue her trouthe)
She hath forsake alas, and that is routhe
That euer woman wolde be so trewe
To trusten man, but she the bet hym knewe
And to the terre she goth a ful good pace
For loue made her to hardy in this caſe
And by the welle, adowne she gan her dresſe
Alas, than cometh a wyde lyonesſe
Out of the wode, with doun moyt afresſt
With bloody mouthe, of strangling of a beeſt

To

To drinken of the wel there as she sat
And whan that Tisbe had espyed that
She ryst her vp, with a ful drery herte
And in a cane, with dredful sore she sterte
For by the moone she sawe it wel withall
And as she ran, her wymple let she fall
And toke none hede, so sore she was a whaped
And eke so glad that she was escaped
And thus she sat, and lurketh wonder stryll
Whan that this lyonesse hath dronke her fyll
Aboute the wel gan she for to wynde
And right anon the wymple gan she fynde
And with her bloody mouth it al to rente
Whan this was done, no lenger she ne stente
But to the wodde her way thā hath she nome
And at the last this Piramus is come
But al to longe (alas) ar home was he
The moone shone, men might wel yse
And in his way, as that he come ful fast
His eyen to the grounde adowne he cast
And in the sonde, as he beheld adoun
He saw the steppes brode of a lyoun
And in his hert he sodaynly agrose
And pale he wexte, therwith his hert arose
And nere he came, & founde the wymple torne
Alas (qō he) the day that I was borne
This o nyght wol both vs louers slee
Howe shoulde I aske mercy of Tisbee
Whan I am he that haue you slayne, alas
My byddyng hath you slayne in this caas
Alas, to bydde a woman gone by nyght
In place there as peryll fallen myght
And I so slowe, alas I ne had be
Here in this place, a furlonge way er ye
Howe what lyon that is in this forest
My body mote he rente, or what best
That wylde is, gnawen mote he myne herte
And with ỹ worde, he to the wymple sterte
And kyst it ofte, & wepte on it ful sore
And sayd wymple alas, there nys no more
But thou shalt fele as wel the blode of me
As thou haste frite the bledyng of Tysbe
And ẅ that worde, he smote him to the herte
The blode out of the wounde as brode sterte
As water, whan the conduyte broken is
Now Tisbe, whiche that wyste nat thys
But sittyng in her drede, she thought thus
Yf it so fall that my Piramus
Be comen hyther, and may me nat fynde
He may me holden false, and eke vnkynde
And out she cometh, & after him gan espyen
Bothe with her hert, and with her eyen
And thought, I wol him tellen of my drede
Both of the lyonesse and of my dede
And at the last her loue than hath she founde
Beatyng with his heles on the grounde
Al blody, and therwithal abacke she sterte
And syke the wawes, quappe gan her herte
And pale as boxe she woxe, and in a throwe
Auysed her, and gan him wel to knowe
That it was Piramus her herte dere
Who couldē write whiche a deedly chere
Hath Tisbe nowe, & how her herte she rente
And howe she gan her selfe to turmente
And how she syeth & swouneth on the groūde
And how she wept of teres full his wounde
How medleth she his blod, ẅ her complaynt
How ẅ her blod, her seluen gan she paynt
Howe clyppeth she the reed corse, alas
How doth this wofull Tisbe in this caas
Howe kysseth she his frosty mouth so colde
Who hath don this? & who hath bē so bolde
To sleen my lefe, o speke Piramus
I am thy Tisbe, that the calleth thus
And therwithal she lyfteth vp his heed
This woful man, that was nat fully deed
Whan that he herde the name of Tisbe cryen
On her he cast his heuy deedly eyen
And downe agayne, & yelderth vp the goste
Tisbe ryst vp, without noyse or boste
And sawe her wymple and his empty sheth
And eke his swerde, ỹ him hath don to deth
Than spake she thus, thy wofull hāde (qō she)
Is stronge ynough in suche a werke to me
For loue shal yeue me strength & hardynesse
To make my wounde large ynough I gesse
I wol eke folowen deed, and I wol de
Felawe, & cause eke of thy deth (qō she)
And though that nothyng saue the deth only
Myght the fro me departe trewly
Thou shalte no more departe nowe fro me
Than fro the deth, for I wol go with the
And nowe ye wretched ielouse fathers our
We that weren whylom children your
We prayen you, withouten more enuye
That in a graue we moten lye
Ses loue hath brought vs this pytous ende
And rightwise god, to euer louer sende
That loueth trewly more prosperite
Than euer had Piramus and Tisbe
And let no gentyl woman her assure
To putten her in suche an auenture
But god forbyd but a woman can
Ben as true and louyng as a man
And for my parte, I shal anon it kyth
And with ỹ worde, his swerd she toke swyth

That warme was of her loues blood, where
Biden the bere the her selwen smote
And thus are Tisbe and Piramus ago
Of trewe men I fynde but fewe mo
In al my bokes, saue this Piramus
And therfore haue I spoken of him thus
For it is deyme to bs men to fynde
A man that can in loue be trewe and fynde
Here may ye se, what louer so he be
A woman dare, and can as wel as he.

Here endeth the legende of Tysbe of
Babylone, and here foloweth
the legende of Dido
quene of Cartage

Lerre s honour Virgyle
Mantuan
Be to thy name, and I
shal as I can
Folowe thy laureme, as
thou goest byfore
Howe Eneas to Dido
was forswore
In thyn Eneyde, and also wol I take
The tenour and the great effectes make
Whan Troye brought was to distruction
By grekes sleyght, and namely by Synon
Fayning the horse offred vnto Mynerue
Thrugh which ỹ many a Troyã must sterue
And Hector had after his dethe apered
And fyre so wode, it might nat ben stered
In al the noble tour of Ilion
That of the eyte was the cheke dongeon
And al the countre was so lowe ybrought
And Priamus the kyng fordone & nought
And Eneas was charged by Venus
To flyen away, he tok Ascanyus
That was his son, in his right hand a stedde
And on his backe he bare, and with him ledde
His olde father, cleped Anchyses
And by the way his wife Creusa he lees
And mokel forow had he in his minde
Er that he couthe his felawshyp fynde
But at the last, when he had hem founde
He made him redy in a certayne stounde
And to the se [illegible] he gan him hye
And sayleth forth, with al his compayne
Towarde Italye, as wolde destynee
But of his auentures in the se
Nys nat to purpose for to speke of hee
For it accordeth nat to my matere
But as I sayd, of hym and of Dido
Shal be my tale, tyl that I haue do
So longe he sayled in the sake se
Tyl in Libye vnneth arryued he
So was he with the tempest al to shake
And whan that he the hauen had take
He had a knyght was called Achates
And him of al his felowshyp he ches
To gone with him, the countrey for to espye
He tok with him nomore companye
But forth they gon, & left his shyppes ryde
His frere and he, without en any gyde
So longe he walketh in this wildernesse
Tyl at the last he mette an huntaresse
A bowe in honde, and arowes had she
Her clothes cutted were vnto the knee
But she was yet the fayrest creature
That euer was yformed by nature
And Eneas and Achates she greete
And thus she to hẽ spake, whã she hem mete
Sawe ye (qõ she) as ye han walked wyde
Any of my sustren walke you besyde
With any wylde boys, or other beest
That they haue hunted to in this forest
Iructed vp, with arowes in her caas
Nay sothly lady (quod this Eneas)
But by thy beautie, as it thynketh me
Thou myghtest neuer erthly woman be
But Phebus sustar art thou, as I gesse
And if so be that thou be a goddesse
Haue mercy on our labour and our wo
I nam no goddesse sothly qõ she tho
For maydens walken in this countree here
With arowes & with bowe, in this manere
This is the realme of Libye, there ye bene
Of whiche that Dido lady is and quene
And shortly tolde al the occasyon
Why Dido came into that region
Of whiche as nowe me lysteth nat to ryme
It neded nat, it nere but losse of tyme
For this is al and some, it was Venus
His owne mother, that spake with him thus
And to Cartage she bade he shuld him dight
And banished anon out of his syght
I couthe folow wolde for wolde Virgyle
But it wolde lasten al to longe whyle
This noble quene, that cleped was Dido
That whylom was the wyfe of Sythes
That fayrer was than the bright soune
This noble towne of Cartage hath begonne
In whiche she reigneth in so great honour
That she was holde of al queenes flour
Of gentylesse, of fredom, & of beautee
That wel was him, that might ones se

Of

Of kynges and lordes so beseyged
That al the worlde her beauty had yseyzed
She stode so wel in euery wightes grace
Whan Eneas was come vnto the place
Vnto the mayster temple of al the toun
There Dido was in her deuocioun
Ful priuely his way than hath he nome
Whan he was in the large temple come
I can not sayne, if that it be possyble
But Venus had him maked inuisible
Thus sayth the boke, withouten any lees
And whan this Eneas and Achates
Padden in this temple ben ouer all
Than founde they depaynted on a wall
How Troye & al the lande distroyed was
Alas that I was borne (qõ Eneas)
Through ỹ world our shame is syd so wyde
Lowe it is payntyd vpon euery syde
Er that weren in prosperite
Ben now disclaundred, and in suche degre
So longer for to lyuen I ne kepe
And with ỹ worde, he brast out for to wepe
So tenderly, that routhe it was to seue
This fresshe lady, of the cyte quene
Stode in the temple, in her estate royal
So richely, and eke so fayre withall
So yonge, so lusty, with her eyen glade
That if that god, ỹ heuen and erthe made
Wold haue a loue, for beaute & goodnesse
And womanhede, routhe, & semelynesse
Whom shuld he louen, but this lady swete
Ther nys no woman to him halfe so mete
Fortune, ỹ hath the world in gouernaunce
Hath sodainly brought in so new a chaũce
That neuer was there yet so ferned a caas
For al the company of Eneas
Which ỹ we wende haue lorne in the see
Driuen is nought ferre fro that cyte
For which the greatest of his lordes, some
By auenture ben to the cyte come
Vnto that same temple for to seke
The quene, and of her socour her beseke
Such renõe was ther sprõg of her goodnesse
And whan they had tolde al her distresse
And al her tempest and al her harde caas
Vnto the quene appered Eneas
And openly beknewe that it was he
Who had ioy than, but his meyne
That haddẽ fõude her lorde, her gouernour
The quene sawe they dyd hym such honour
And had herde ofte of Eneas, er tho
And in her hert had routhe and wo
That euer such a noble man as he
Shal ben disherited in suche degree
And sawe the man, ỹ he was lyke a knyght
And sufficiaunt of person and of myght
And lyke to ben a very gentyl man
And wel his wordes he beset can
And had a noble vysage for the nones
And formed wel of brawne and of bones
And after Venus, had suche fayrnesse
That no man might be halfe so fayre I gesse
And wel a lorde him semed for to be
And for he was a straunger, somwhat she
Lyked him the bet, as god do boote
To some folke, often newe thynge is swote
Anon her hert hath pyte of his wo
And with pyte, loue came also
And thus for pyte and for gentylnesse
Refreshed must he ben of his distresse
She sayd: certes, that she sory was
That he hath had suche peryl & such caas
And in her frendly speche, in this manere
She to him spake, & sayd as ye may here.
Se ye nat Venus sonne and Anchises
In good fayth, al the worshyp and encres
That I may goodly done you, ye shal haue
Your shyppes and your meyne shal I saue
And many a gentyl worde she spake him to
And cõmaunded her messangers to go
The same day withouten any fayle
His shyppes for to seke, and hem vitayle
Ful many a beest she to the shyppes sent
And with the wyne she gan hem to presente
And to her royal paleys she her spedde
And Eneas alway with her she ledde
What nedeth you the feestes to discryue
He neuer better at ease was in his lyue
Ful was the feast of deintees and richesse
Of instrumentes of songe, and of gladnesse
And many an amorous lokyng and deuyse
This Eneas is come to Paradyse
Out of the swolowe of hel, & thus in ioye
Remembreth him of his estate in Troye
To bathyng chambres ful of parauentes
Of riche beddes, and of pauementes
This Eneas is ledde after the meete
And with the quene whan that he had seete
And spyces passed, and the [illegible] agon
Vnto his chambre was he lad anon
To take his ease, and for to haue his reste
With al his folke, to done what so hem leste
There nas courser wel ybridled none
Ne stede for the iustyng wel to gone
Ne large paulfrey, easy for the nones
Ne iowel fret ful of riche stones

Ne taches ful of golde, of large wyght
Ne ruby none that shyneth by nyght
Ne gemyl hauren fauhon peronere
Ne houndе for herte, wilde boze, or deere
Ne cuppe of gold, with floreyns newe ybette
That in the londe of Libye may ben gette
That Dido me hath Eneas it yfent
And al is payed, what that he hath spent
Thus eñ this honozable quene her geftes cal
As she that can in fredom passen all
Eneas sothely eke, without lees
Hath sent to his shyppe by Achates
Afrer his sonne, and after riche thinges
Both ceptre, clothes, bzoches, and eke ringes
Some for to weare, and some to present
To her, that al these nobie thynges him sente
And bad his sonne bowe that he shulde make
The presentyng, and to the quene it take
Repayred is this Achates agayne
And Eneas ful blyssful is and fayne
To seen his yong sonne Ascanyus
For to him it was reported thus
That Cupido, that is the god of lone
At prayer of his mother bie aboue
Had the lykenesse of the childe yrake
This noble quene enamoured for to make
On Eneas, but of that scripture
Be as be may, I make of it no cure
But soth is this, þ quene hath made suche
Unto this child, þ wonder was to here chere
And of the present that his father sent
She thanked him ofte in good entent
Thus is this quene in pleasaunce and loye
With al these newe lusty folke of Troye
And of the dedes bathe she more enquired
Of Eneas, and al the story leed
Of Troy, and al the longe day they twey
Entendeden for to speke and for to pley
Of whiche there gan to breden suche a fyre
That fely Dido hath nowe suche desyre
With Eneas her newe gest to deale
That she lost her hewe and eke her heale
Nowe to the effecte, nowe to the frute of all
Why I have tolde this story, and tellen shall
Thus I beginne, it fell upon a nyght
Whan that the sonne vpreysed had her light
This noble quene vnto her rest wente
She sigheth sore, and gon her selfe turmente
She walketh, waloweth, & made many braide
As done these louers, as I have herde sayde
And at the last, vnto her sustet Anne
She made her mone, & rizt thus spake she thã
Now dere sustet myn, what may it be
That me agasteth in my dreame (qð she)
This yche newe Troyan is so in my thozt
For that me thynketh he is so wel yworth
And eke so lykely to ben a man
And therwith so myche good he can
That al my loue and lyst lythe in his cure
Have ye nat herde him tell his auenture
Nowe certes Anne, if that ye rede me
I wol fayne to him ywedded be
This is the effecte, what shuld I more saye
In him lythe al, to do me lyue or deye
Her sustet Anne, as she þ couthe her good
Said as her thought, & counsele it withstode
But herof was so longe a sermonyng
It were to longe to make rehersyng
But fynally, it may nat be withstonde
Loue wol loue, for no wight wol it wonde
The day wonyng up rysh, out of the see
This amerous quene chargeth her meyne
The nettes dresse, and speares brode & kene
In huntyng wol this lusty freshe quene
So pricketh her this newe lolp wo
To horse is al her lusty folke ygo
Unto fat courte the houndes ben ybrought
And vp on courser swyfte as any thought
Her yong knyghtes beuen al aboute
And of her women eke an huge route
Upon a thicke palfray, paper whyte
With sadel reed, embrouded with beryte
Of golde the barres, vp embosted hygh
Sate Dido, al in golde and perrey wigh
And she is fayre, as is the bright morowe
That healeth sycke folkes of nightes sorowe
Upon a courser, startlyng as the fyre
Wen myght tume him with a lytel wyre
But Eneas, lyke Phebus to deuyse
So was he freshe arayed in his wyse
The fomy bridel, with the bytte of golde
Gouerneth he right as him selfe hath wolde
And forth this noble quene and this lady ryde
On huntyng, with this Troyan by her syde
The heerde of harres, founden is anon
With hey gobet, pricke thou, let gon, let gon
Why nyl the lyon comen or the beare
That I might him ones meten vp this spere
Thus sayne thys yonge folke, & vp they hyl
The wylde harres, and haue hem at her wyl
Amonge al this, to romblen gan the heuen
The thonder rored with a grisly steuen
Down come þ rayne, vp hayle & sleet so fast
With heuens fyre, that made so fore agast
This noble quene, and also her meyne
That eche of hem was glad away to flye

In

And shortly fro the tempest her to saue
She fled her self, into a lytel caue
And with her went this Eneas also
Ne wist with hem if there went any mo
The auctour maketh of it no mencion
And here began the hepe affection
Betwyxt hem two this was the first mouwe
Of her gladnesse, & gynnyng of her sorowe
For thus hath Eneas ytwisted so
And tolde her al his hurt and al his wo
And swore so depe to her to be trewe
For wel or wo, and chaunge for no newe
And as a false louer, so wel can playne
That fely Dido rewed on his payne
And toke him for husbónd, & became his wyfe
For euermore, while that hem last lyfe
And after this, whan that the tempest stynte
With myrth out as they came, hom they wēt
The wicked fame up rose, and that anon
Howe Eneas hath with the quene ygon
Into the caue, and demed as hem lyst
And whan ỳ kyng (ỳ Yarbas hight) it wyst
As he that had her loued euer his lyfe
And wowed her to haue to his wife
Such sorow as he hath maked, & such chere
It is a ruthe and pyte for to here
But as in loue, alday it happeth so
That one shal laughen at anothers wo
Nowe laugheth Eneas, and is in loye
And more richesse, than euer was in Troye
O fely woman, ful of innocence
Ful of pyte, of ruthe, and continence
What maked you to men to trusten so
Haue ye such routhe vpon her fayned wo
And knowe such olde ensamples you before
Se ye nat al howe they ben forsworne
Wherfore se ye one, that he ne hath lafte his lefe
Or ben vnkynde, or done her some mischefe
Or pylled her, or bosted of his dede
Ye may as wel it sene, as ye may rede
Take hede now of this great gentyl man
This Troyan, that so wel her pleasen can
That fayneth him so trewe and obeysyng
So gentyl, and so pryuy of his doyng
And can so wel done al his obeysaunce
To her, at festes and at daunce
And whan she goth to temple, & home agayn
And fasten tyl he hath his lady seyn
And beaten in his deuyses for her sake
Nor I nat what, & songes wolde he make
Iusten, and don of armes many thynges
Sende her letters, tokens, broches, & rynges
Now herkeneth how he shal his lady serue

There as he was in peryll for to sterue
For hunger and for mischefe in the see
And desolate, and fled fro his countree
And al his folke with tempest al to dryuen
She hath her body and eke her realme yeuen
In to his honde, there she might haue bene
Of other lande than of Carrage a quene
And lyued in ioy ynough, what wold ye more
This Eneas, that hath thus depe yswore
Is wery of his crafte within a throwe
The hote ernest is al ouer blowe
And priuely he doth his thynges dight
And shapeth him to stele away by nyght
This Dido hath suspection of this
And thought wel that it was al amys
For in his bed he lythe a nyght and syketh
She asketh him anon, what him mysseth
My dere herte, whiche that I loue moste
Certes (quō he) this nyght my fadres goste
Hath in my slepe, me so sore turmented
And eke Mercury his message hath presented
That nedes to the conquest of Italye
My destyne is sone for to saylе
For which me thinketh, brosten is mine herte
Therwith his false teres out they sterte
And taketh her within his armes two
Is that in ernest (quō she) wol ye so
Haue ye nat sworne, to wyfe me to take
Alas, what woman wol ye of me make
I am a gentyl woman, and a quene
Ye wol not fro your wyfe thus foule flene
That I was borne alas, what shal I do
To tellen in shorte, this noble quene Dido
She seketh halowes, and dothe sacrifice
She kneleth, crieth, that routhe is to deuyse
Conjureth him, and profereth him to be
His thral, his seruaunt, in the best degre
She falleth him to fote, and sowneth there
Dischreuyle with her bright gylte heere
And saith, haue mercy, let me with you ryde
These lordes, which ỳ wonnen me besyde
Wol me distroyen onely for your sake
And ye wol me nowe to wyfe take
As ye haue sworne, thā wol I yeue you leue
To sleen me with your swerde, now sone at eue
For than yet shal I dyen as your wyfe
I am with childe, & yeue my childe his lyfe
Mercy lorde, haue pyte in your thought
But al this thyng auayleth her right nought
And as a traytour forthe gan to saylе
Towarde the large countre of Italye
And thus hath he left Dido in wo & pyne
And wedded there a lady hyght Lauyne

A clothe he lafte, and eke his swoorde alsoinge
whan he fro Dido stale in her sleepinge
Right at her bedres hed, to gan he hye
whan that he stale away to hys naupe
Which clothe, whan sely Dido gan awake
She hath it kyste ful ofte for hys sake
And sayd, o swete cloth, while Jupiter it lefte
Take my soule, vnbynde me of this unrefte
I haue fulfylled of fortune al the courle
And thus alas, withouten his socourse
Twenty tyme yswouned hath she thanne
And whan that she vnto her suster Anne
Complayned had, of which I may nat write
So great routh I haue it for to endyte
And bad her nor ce and her sustren gon
To strechen fyre, and other thynges anon
And sayde that she wolde sacrifye
And whan she might her tyme wel aspye
Upon the fyre of sacrifice she sterte
And with his swoorde she roke her to the herte
But as myn auctour sayth, yet thus she seyd
Or she was borne, before or she deyde
She wrote a letter anon, and thus began
Right so (qd she) as the whyte swan
Ayenst his dethe beginneth for to syng
Right so to you I make my complaynyng
Not that I trowe to getten you agayne
For wel I wote it is al in bayne
Sens that the goddes ben contrarious to me
But syn my name is lost throur you (qd she)
I may wel lese a worde or you or letter
Al be it, I shal be neuer the better
For thilke winde that blewe your ship away
The same winde hath blowe away your fay
But who so wol al this letter haue in mynde
Rede Ouide, and in him he shal it fynde.

Here endeth the legende of Dido quene of Carrage: And here folowth the legende of Hypsiphile and Medea.

O thou rote of false louers, duke Jason
Thou fleet, deuourer, & confusyon
Of gentyl women, gentyl creatures
Thou madest thy resting and thy lures
To ladyes of thy feathyche apparaunce
And of thy wordes farsed with pleasaunce
And of thy fayned routh, and thy manere
With thyn obeysaunce and humble chere
And with thyn counterfeyted payne and wo
There other failen one, thou failed two
O ofte swore thou, that thou wolde dye
For lone, whan thou ne feltest maladye
Saue foule deyne, whiche thou calledst loue
If that I lyue, thy name shal be shoue
In englyshe, that thy derrynge shal be knowe
Haue at ye Jaso, howe thyn honour is blowe
But certes, it is bothe routh and wo
That Loue with false louers werketh so
For they shal haue wel better loue and chere
Than he that hath bought loue ful dere
Or had in armes many a bloody bore
For euer as tender a capon eateth the fore
Though he be false, & hath ye foule betrayed
As shal the goodman that therfore payde
Although he haue to the capon shyl & ryght
The false fore wol haue his parte at nyght
On Jason this ensample is wel yseue
By Hipsiphile, and Medea the queue

In Thessalye, as Ouyde telleth vs
There was a knyght, that hight Pelleus
That had a brother, whiche that hight Eson
And whan for age he might vnnethes gon
He yaue to Pelleus the gouernyng
Of al his reigne, and made him lorde & king
Of whiche Eson, this Jason gotten was
That in his tyme, in al that lande there nas
Nat suche a famous knyght of gentrielle
Of fredom, of strength, and of lustynesse
After his fathers deth he nate him so
That there nas none that hyll ben his foe
But did him al honour and companye
Of whiche this Pelleus hath great enuye
Imagynyng, that Jason might be
Enhaunsed so, and put in suche degre
With loue of lordes of this regroun
That from his reigne, he maye be put adoun
And in his wyt a nyght compassed he
Howe Jason might best distroyed be
Withouten sclaunder of his compassement
And at the last he roke anysement
That to sende him into some ferre countre
There as this Jason may distroyed be
This was his wit, al made he to Jason
Great chere of lake, and of affection
For drede lest his lordes it espyde
So fyl it, as fame renneth wyde
There was such rydyng ouer al, & such loos
That in an Yle, that called was Colcos
Beyonde Troye eastwarde in the see
That there was a ram, that men might se

That

That had a flees of golde, that shone so bryzt
That no where was there such another sight
But it was kept alway with a dragoun
And many other marueyles vp and doun
And with two bulles, maked al of bras
That spyrred fyre, & muche thing there was
But this was eke the tale natheles
That who so wolde wynnen thilke flees
He muste bothe, or he it winnen myght
With the bulles and the dragon fyght
And kyng Otes, lorde was of that yle
This Peliens bethought vpon this wyle
That he his neuewe Jason wolde exyle
To sayen to that londe, hym to dispyle
And sayd, neuer wil it myght be
That suche worthyp myght fall the
That thou thys famous treasore myght wyn
And bryngen it my regyon within
It were to me great pleasaunce & honour
Than were I holde to quite thy labour
And al thy costes I wol my self make
And chose what folke thou wolt with ỹ take
Let se nowe, darstu thou taken this voyage
Jason was yonge, and lusty of corage
And vnderstode to don this ilke empryse
Soon Argus his shyppes gan deuyse
With Jason went the stronge Hercules
And many another, that he with hym ches
But who so asketh, who is with hym gon
Let him rede Argonauticon
For he wol tel a tale longe ynough
Orpheus anon the sayle by drough
When the wynde was good, & gan him hye
Out of hys countre, called Thessalye
So longe they sayled in the salte see
Til in the yle of Lemnon aryued he
Al be thys nat rehersed of Guydo
Yet sayth Ouyde in his epystles so
And of this yle lady was and quene
The fayre yonge Hypsiphile the shene
That whilom Thoas doughter was ỹ king
Hipsiphile was gon in her playeng
And romyng on the cleuis by the see
Vnder a banke anone espyed she
Where lay the shyppe, that Jason gan arriue
Of her goodnesse adowne she lenderly blyue
To weten, if that any straunge wyght
With tempest thyder were yblowe anyght
To done hym socour, as was her vsaunce
To fortheren euery wyght, & don pleasaunce
Of very bounte, and of curtesye
This messanger adowne hym gan to hye
And founde Jason and Hercules also
That in a cogge to londe were ygo
Hem to refreshen, and to take the ayre
The morwyng attempre was and fayre
And in her way this messanger hem mette
Ful comyngly these lordes two he grette
And dyd hys message, askyng hem anon
If that they were broken, or ought wo begon
Or had nede of lodesmen, or vitayle
For succour they shulde nothyng fayle
For it was vtterly the quenes wyl
Jason answerde meekely and styl
Myy lady (quod he) thanke I hertely
Of her goodnesse, vs nedeth trewely
Nothyng as nowe, but that we weery be
And come for to play out of the see
Til that the wynde be better in our way
This lady rometh by the clyffe to play
With her meyne, endlonge the stroude
And fynderh this Jason, & this other stonde
In speehynge of this thing, as I you tolde
This Hercules and Jason gan beholde
Howe that ỹ quene it was, & fayre her grette
Anon right as they with this lady mette
And she toke hede, & knewe by her manere
By her aray, by wordes, and by chere
That it were gentyl men of great degre
And to the castel with her ledeth she
These straunge folke, & doth hē great honour
And asketh hem of trauayle and of labour
That they haue suffred in the salte see
So that within a day, two or thre
She knewe by the folke ỹ in his shippes be
That it was Jason ful of renomee
And Hercules, that had the great loos
That soughten the auentures of Colcos
And dyd hem honour, more than before
And with hem dealed euer longer the more
For they ben worthy folke withouten lees
And namely moste she spake with Hercules
To hym her herte bare, he shulde be
Sadde, wise, and trewe, of wordes auysee
Without any other affeccion
Of loue, or any other ymagynacion
This Hercules hath this Jason praysed
That to the sonne he hath it vp reysed
That halfe so trewe a man there nas of loue
Vnder the cope of heuen, that is aboue
And he was wise, hardy, secrete, and riche
Of these thre pointes, ther nas non him lyche
Of fredom passed he, and lusty hede
Al tho that lyuen, or ben deed
Therto so great a gentyl man was he
And of Thessalye lykely kyng to be

There nas no lacke, but that he was agaste
To loue, and for to speke shamefaste
Him had leuer hym selfe to murdre and dye
Than that men shulde a louer hym espye
As wolde god that I had ipreue
Hy bloode and flesshe, so that I might lyue
With the nones, ȳ he had aught wher a wife
For his estate, for suche a lusty life
She shulden lede, with this lusty knyght
And al this was compassed on the nyght
Betwixe hym Jason, and this Hercules
Of these two here was a shrewde lees
To come to house, vpon an innocent
For to be dote this quene was her entent
And Jason is as coye as is a mayde
He loketh prtously, but naught he sayde
But frely yaue he to her counsayers
Yeftes great, and to her officers
As wolde god that I leaser had and tyme
By processe, al hys wronge for to ryme
But in this house, if any false louer be
Right as hym selfe now dothe, right so dyd he
With fayning, and with crery subtel dede
Ye get no more of me, but ye wol rede
Thorugnyal, that telleth al the caas
The soth is thys, that Jason wedded was
Unto this quene, and toke of her substaunce
What so hym lyst, vnto hys purueyaunce
And vpon her begate children two
And through his sayle, and saw her neuer mo
A letter sent she him certayne
Which were to longe to writen and to sayne
And hym repenteth of hys great vntrouth
And prayeth hym on her to haue some routh
And on hys children two, she sayde him this
That they be lyke of al thyng ywis
To Jason, saue they couthe nat begyle
And prayed god, or it were longe whyle
That she that had hys hert yreste her fro
Muste fynden hym vntrue also
And that she muste bothe her children spyl
And al tho that suffereth hym hys wyl
And tre we to Jason was she al her lyfe
And euer kepte her chaste, as for his wyfe
Ne neuer had she love at her herte
But dyed for his loue of sorowes smerte
To Colcos come is thys duke Jason
That is of loue deuourer and dragon
As Nature appereth some alwaye
And from some to some it passen may
Or as a welle that were botomles
Right so can Jason haue no pees
For to destres through his appetyte
To done with gentyl women his delyte
Thys is his lust, and his felicite
Jason is roomed forth to the cyte
That whylom cleped was Jasonycos
That was the mayster tour of al Colcos
And hath prolde the cause of his coming
Unto Otes, of that countrey kyng
Praying hym that he must done his assay
To geten the flese of golde, if that he may
Of whiche the kynge assenteth to hys bone
And dothe him honour, as it is to done
So ferforthe, that his doughter ȳ his herte
Medea, which that was so wise and fayre
That fayrer saugh there neuer mā with eye
He made her done to Jason companye
At meate, and syte by hym in the hal
Nowe was Jason a frendly man withal
And lyke a lorde, and had a great renoun
And of his lore as coyal as a froun
And godly of his speche, and familiere
And coude of loue al the craftes arte pleniere
Within a tour booke, with curryeh obseruaūce
And as fortune her ought a foule mischaūce
She wore enamored vpon thys man
Jason (qō she) for ought I se or can
As of thys thyng, the whiche ye ben about
Ye and your frēde ye putte in muche dout
For who so wol this auenture atchyue
He may nat weie asseuren, as I triue
Withouten dethe, but I hys helpe be
But natheles it is my wyl (qō she)
To forthren you, so that ye shall nat dye
But turnen sounde home to your contrey
My right lady (qō thys Jason) thā
That ye haue of my dethe or my wo
Any regarde, and done me thys honour
I wot wel that my myght, ne my labour
May nat deserue it in my lyues day
God thanke you, there I ne can ne may
Your man am I, and lowely you beseche
To ben my helpe, withouten more speche
But certes for my dethe shal I not spare
Tho gan this Medea to hym declare
The peryl of this caas, fro poynt to poynt
Of his batayle, and in what disioynt
He stode, of whiche no creature
Saue onely she, ne myght his lyfe assure
And shortly, right to the poynt for to go
They ben accorded fully betwyxe hem two
That Jason shal her wedde, as true knight
And terme yset to come soone at nyght
Unto her chambre, and make there his othe
Upon the goddes, that he for lese or lothe

Se shulde her neuer fallen nyght ne day
To ben her husbonde whyle he lyue may
Is she that from his deth hym saued here
And herupon at nyght they mette yfere
And bote his othe, & gothe with her to bedde
And on the morowe vpwarde he him spedde
For he hath caught di how he shal nat fayle
The fees to wynne, & stynten hys batayle
And saued hym hys lyfe, and hys honour
And gate hym a name, as a conquerour
Right through the sleight of her enchantmēt
Nowe hath Jason the fleese, & home is went
With Medea, a treasours ful great wonne
Out wryste of her father she is gonne
To Thessalye, with duke Jason her lefe
That afterwarde hath wrought her to mischefe
For as a traytour he is from her go
And with her lefte yonge children two
And falsely hath betrayed her, alas
And euer in loue a chefe traytour he was
And wedded yet the thirde wyfe anon
That was the doughter of kyng Creon
This is the merde of louyng and guerdon
That Medea receyued of duke Jason
Right for her trouth, and for her kyndnesse
That loued him better than her life I gesse
And lefte her father, and her heritage
And of Jason thys is the vassalage
That in his dayes nas neuer non yfounde
So false a louer, goyng on the grounde
And therfore in her letter thus she sayd
Ful well she of hys falsnesse him vmbrayd
Why lyked me thy yelowe heer to se
More than the boundes of myn honestee
Why lyked me thy youth and thy fayrnesse
And of thy tonge, the infynyte gracyousnesse
O haddest thou in thy conquest dreed ybe
Ful mikel bastrouth had there dyed with the
Wel can Ouyde her letter in verse endyte
Whiche were as nowe to longe for to wryte.

Here endeth the legende of Hypsyphile and Medea: And here folowyth the legende of Lucrece of Rome.

Nowe mote I fain therelyng of kynges
Of Rome, for her horrible doynges
Of the laste kynge Tarquinius
As sayth Ouid, and Titus Lyuius
But for that cause tel I nat this storye
But for to prayse, and drawen in memorye
The very wyfe, the very Lucresse
That for her wyfehode, and her stedfastnesse
Nat onely that these panyms her cōmende
But that cleped is in our legende
The great Austyn, that hath compassioun
Of thys Lucrece that starke in Rome toun
And in what wise, I wol but shortly treat
And of this thing I touch but the great
Whan Ardea besiege was aboute
With Romayns, that ful sterne were & stout
Ful longe lay the siege and lytel wroughten
So þ they wer halfe ydel, as hem thoughten
And in his play Tarquinius the yonge
Gan for to tape, for he was lyght of tonge
And sayd, that it was an ydle lyfe
No man dyd there more than hys wyfe
And iet vs speke of wyues, that is best
Prayse euery man hys owne as him lest
And with out speche iet vs rase out herte
A knight (that hyght Colatyn) vp sterte
And sayd thus, nay sir it is no nede
To trowen on the worde, but on the dede
I haue a wyfe (qd he) that as I trowe
Is holden good of al that euer her knowe
Go we to Rome to nyght, and we shul se
Tarquinius answerde, that lyketh me
To Rome they be comen, and fast hem dight
To Colatyns house, and downe they lyght
Tarquinius, and eke thys Colatyne
The husbonde knewe the estets wel a fyne
And ful priuely in to the house they gone
Nor at the gate, porter was there none
And at the chambre doore they abyde
Thys noble wyfe sate by her beddes syde
Discheueled, for no maner she ne thought
And soft wol sayth Liul that she wrought
To kepen her from slouthe and ydelnesse
And bad her seruauntes done her besynesse
And asketh hem, what tydynges heren ye
How sayth men of the siege, howe shal it be
God wolde the walles were fallen a downe
Myn husbonde is to longe out of this towne
For whiche drede doth me sore to smerte

Right

Right as a swoorde, it stingeth to myn hert
Whan I thynke on thys or of that place
God sane my lorde, I pray hym for his grace
And therwithal so tenderly she gan wepe
And of her werke she toke no more kepe
But mekely she let her eyen fal
And thylke semblant sate her wel withal
And eke her teares ful of heynesse
Embrieled her wyfely chastenesse
Her countenaunce is to herte digne
For they accorden in dede and signe
And with that woorde her husbonde Colatin
Or she of hym was ware, came sterrying in
And sayd, drede the nat for I am here
And she anone up rose, with blisful chere
And kyssed hym, as of wyues is the wonne
Tarquinius, this proude kynges sonne
Conceyued hath her beautie and her chere
Her yelowe heere, her bountie, & her manere
Her hewe, her woordes, ỳ she hath cõplayned
And by no craft her beautie was nat fayned
And caught to this lady suche desyre
That in his herte he brent as any fyre
So wodely, that his witte was al forgoten
For wel thought he she shulde nat be goten
And aye the more he was in dispayre
The more coueyteth, and thought her fayre
His blynde lust was al his coueytyng
On morowe, whan the birde began to syng
Unto the siege he cometh ful priuely
And by hym selfe he walketh soberly
The ymage of her recordyng alway newe
Thus lay her heere, & thus fresh was her hew
Thus sate, thus span, thys was her chere
Thus fayre she was, & this was her manere
Al this conceyte hys herte hath newe ytake
And as the fyre, with tempest al to shake
That after whan the storme is al ago
Yet wol the water quappe a day or two
Right so, though that her forme were absent
The pleasaunce of her forme was present
But nat heresse nat plesaunce, but delyte
Or an vnrightful talent with dispyte
For maugre her, she shal my lemman be
Hap helpeth hardy man alway (qõ he)
What ende that I make, it shal be so
And gyrte him with his swoorde, & gan to go
And he forthe right, ryl to Rome he come
And al alone his way that he hath nome
Unto the house of Colatyn ful ryght
Down was ỳ sõne, & day hath lost his lyght
And in he come, vnto a priuy halke
And in the night ful theefely gan he stalke
Whan euery wight was to his rest brought
Ne no wight had of treson suche a thought
Whether by windowe, or by other gyn
With swerde ydrawe, shortly he cometh in
There as she lay, this noble wyfe Lucrece
And as she woke, her brede she felt presse
What best is that (qõ she) that wayeth thus
I am the kynges sonne Tarquinius
(Qõ he) but & thou crie, or any noyse make
Or if thou any creature awake
By thylke god, that formed man of lyme
This swerde through thyn herte shal I ryue
And therwithal, vnto her throte he stert
And set the swerde al sharpe on her herte
No woord she spake, she hath no might therto
What shal she sayne, her witte is al ago
Right as a wolfe that fareth a lambe alone
To whom shal she cõplayne or make mone
What, shal she fight with an hardy knyght
Wel wotte men a woman hath no myght
What, shal she crye, or howe shal she asterte
That hath her by the throte vñ swerd at herte
She asketh grace, and sayd al that she can
No wolt thou nat (qõ this cruel man)
As wisely Jupiter my soule saue
I shal in thy stable slee thy knaue
And lay hym in thy bedde and loude crye
That I the fynde in suche auoutrye
And thus thou shalt be dede and also reste
Thy warne, for thou shalt nat eschape
This Romayns wiues loueden so her name
In thylke tyme, and dreden so the shame
That what for fere of slaũder, & dred of deth
She loste both at ones wit and breth
And in a swough she lay, & woorse so deed
Men mighten smite of her arme or heed
She feleth nothyng, neither soule ne fayre
Tarquinius, that arte a kynges heyre
And shuldest, as by lynage and by ryght
Done as a lorde, and a bery knyght
Why hast thou done dispite to chiualrye
Why hast thou done thy lady vylanye
Alas, of thee this was a vilayneus dede
But nowe to the purpose, in the story I rede
Whan he was gone, & this mischaũce is fal
This lady sent after her frendes al
Father, mother, & husbonde, al yfere
And discheueled with her heere clere
In habyte suche as women vsed tho
Unto the buryeng of her frendes go
She sate in hal, with a sorowful syght
Her frendes asken what her ayleth myght
And who was dede, & she sate aye wepyng

I woote

Whyche for shame we may the forthout byg
Se vpon hem she durst nat beholde
But at the laste of Tarquiny she hem tolde
This rufful caste, and al this thyng horrible
The wo to rei, were impossible
That she and al her frendes make at ones
Had tolkes herres ben of stones
It might haue maked hem vpon her trwe
Her hert was so wyfely and so trewe
She sayd, that for her gylte ne for her blame
Her husbonde shulde nat haue the foule name
That wolde she nat suffren by no waye
And they answerde al vnto her saye
That they forgaue it her, for it was right
It was no gylte, it lay nat in her myght
And sayden her ensamples many one
But al for naught, for thus she sayd anone
Yet as be may (qõ she) of forgyuyng
I wyl nat haue no forgyfte for nothyng
But prively she cought forth a knyfe
And therwithal she rafte her selfe her lyfe
And as she fel a downe she caste her loke
And of her clothes, yet herde she toke
For in her fallyng, yet she had a care
Leste that her fete, or suche thynges lay bare
So wel she loued clennesse, and eke trouthe
Of her had al the towne of Rome routhe
And Brutus hath by her chaste blode swore
That Tarquin shulde vanished be therfore
And al his kynne, and let the people cal
And openly the tale he tolde hem al
And openly let cary her on a bere
Thrugh al ỹ towne, that men may se & here
The horrible dede of her oppressyoun
Ne neuer was there kyng in Rome toun
Sens thylke day, and she was holden there
A sayut, and euer her day yhalowed dere
As in her lawe: and thus endeth Lucresse
The noble wyfe, Tytus beareth witnesse
That it for she was of loue so trewe
Ne in her wyl she chaunged for no newe
And in her stable herte, sadde and kynde
That in these women men may alday fynde
There as they cast her hert, there it dwelleth
For wel I wote, that Thrist him selfe telleth
That in Israel, as wyde as is the londe
That so great faith in al the lond he ne fõde
As in a woman, and this is no lye
And as for men, loke ye suche tyrannye
They done al day, assay hem who so lyste
The trewest is ful horrible for to tryste.

Here endeth the legende of Lucrece of Rome, & here foloweth the legende of Ariadne of Athenes.

Thou infernal Minos, of Crete kyng
Nowe cometh thy lot, ỹ comest on the tyng
Nat for thy sake onely wryten is this storye
But for to cleape ayen vnto memorye
Of Theseus the great duc of Athenes
For whiche the goddes of heuen abone
Ben wroth, & wrath haue take for thy synne
Be cred for shame, nowe I thy lyfe begynne
Minos that was the mighty kyng of Crete
That had an hundred cities strong & grete
To scole hath sent hys sonne Androgeus
To Athenes, of the whiche it happed thus
That he was slayne, lernyng philosophye
Right in that eyte, nat but for enuye
The great Minos, of the whiche I spekc
Hys sonnes deth is come for to wreke
Alcathoe he besieged harde and longe
But nat heles the walles be so stronge
And Nisus, that was kyng of that eyte
So chyualrous, that lytel dredeth he
Of Minos or his hoste, toke he no cure
Tyl on a day befyl an auenture
That Nisus doughter stode vpon the wal
And of the siege, sawe the maner al
So happed it, that at scarmyshing
She caste her hert vpon Minos the kyng
For his beautie, and his chyualrye
So sore, that she wende for to dye
And shortly of this processe for to pace
She made Minos wynnen thylke place
So that the cite was al at his wyl
To sauen whom hym lyste, or ris syl
But wickedly he quither kyndenesse
And let her drenche in sorowe and distresse
Nere that the goddes had of her pyte
But that tale were to longe as nowe for me
Athenes wan thys kyng Minos also
As Alcathoe, and other townes mo
And this ỹ effect, that Minos hath so driuen
Hem of Athenes, that they mote hym yeuen
Fro yere to yere, her owne children dere
For to be slayne, as ye shal after here
This Minos hath a monster, a wicked beest
That was so cruel, that without arrest
Whan a man was brought in to his presence

He

He wolde him rate, there helpeth no defence
And euery thirde yere, withouten doute
They caſten lotte, as it came aboute
On ryche and poore, he muſte his ſonne take
And of his childe he muſt preſente make
To Mynos, to ſaue hym or to ſpyll
Or let his beeſt deuour hym at his wyll
And this hath Mynos don right in diſpyte
To wreke his ſonne was ſet al his deſyre
And make hem of Athenes hys thral
Fro yere to yere, whyle he lyuen ſhal
And whom he ſayleth whā this toun is wou
This wicked cuſtome is ſo longe ygon
Tyl of Atheues kyng Egeus
Wyote ſenden his owne ſonne Theſeus
Seyng that the lotte is fallen hym vpon
To ben deuoured, for grace is there non
And forth is ladde this wofull ynge knyght
Unto ꝑ countre of king Mynos ful of might
And in a priſon ferred faſte is he
Tyl the tyme he ſhulde yſtreten be
Wel mayſt thou wepe, o woful Theſeus
That art a kynges ſonne, and damned thus
Me thinketh thys, that thou art depe yholde
To whom that ſaued the fro cares colde
And nowe yf any woman helpe the
Wel oughteſt thou her ſeruaunt for to be
And ben her trewe louer yere by yere
But nowe to come ayen to my matere
The toure, there this Theſeus is throwe
Downe in the bottom derke, a wonder lowe
Was ioyning to the wal of a foreyne
Longyng vnto the doughteren tweyne
Of Mynos, that in her chambres grete
Dweltен aboue the mayſter ſtrete
Of the towne, in ioy and in ſolas
Not I nat howe, it happed per caas
As Theſeus complayned him by nyght
The kynges doughter, that Ariadne hight
And eke her ſuſter Phedra, herden al
His complaynte, as they ſtode on the wal
And loked vpon the bright moone
Hem lyſte nat to go to bedde ſo ſoone
And of his wo they had compaſſyon
A kynges ſonne to be in ſuche priſon
And ben deuoured, thought hem great pyte
Than Ariadne ſpake to her ſuſter fre
And ſayd: Phedra lene ſuſter dere
This woful lordes ſonne may ye nat here
Howe pitouſly he complayneth his kynne
And eke his poore eſtate that he is inne
And gyltleſſe, certes nowe it is routhe
And yf ye wol aſſent by my trouthe
He ſhal ben holpen howe ſo that we do
Phedra anſwerde, ywis me is as wo
For him, as euer I was for any man
And to his helpe the beſt rede I can
Is, that we done the gayler priuely
To come and ſpeke with vs haſtely
And done this woful man with him to mete
For if he may this monſter ouercome
Than were he quite, there is none other bote
Let vs wel taſte hym at his herte roote
That if ſo be, that he a weapon haue
Where that he his lyfe dare kepe or ſaue
Fighten with this feude, and him defende
For in the priſon, there as he ſhal diſcende
Ye wote wel, that the beeſt is in a place
That is nat derke, a hath rōme & eke ſpace
To welde an axe, or ſwerde, ſtaffe, or knife
So that me thynketh he ſhulde ſaue his life
If that he be a man, he ſhal do ſo
And we ſhal make hym balles eke alſo
Of wexe and towe, that whā he gapeth fel
In to the beeſtes throte he ſhal hem caſt
To ſtoppe his honger, and encomber his taſte
And right anon, whan that Theſeus ſeeth
The beeſt achoked, he ſhal on hym leepe
To ſleen hym, or they comen mete to keepe
This weapen ſhal the gayler, or that tyde
Ful priuely within the priſon hyde
And for the houſe is crouked to and fro
And hath ſo queynt wayes for to go
For it is shapenas the maſe is wrought
Therto haue I a remedy in my thought
That by a clewe of twyne, as he hath gon
The ſame way he may retorne anon
Folowing alway the threde, as he hath come
And whan this beeſt is ouercome
Than may he flyen away out of this ſtede
And eke the gayler may be with hym lede
And hym auaunce at home in his countre
Seyng that ſo great a lordes ſonne is he
This is my rede, if that ye dare it take
What ſhulde I lenger ſermon of it make
The gayler cometh, and with him Theſeus
Whan theſe thynges ben accorded thus
Downe ſate Theſeus vpon his knee
The right [illegible] of my lyfe (quod he)
I forgyue [illegible] ydampned to the dethe
Fro you, lordes that me laſteth breethe
I wol nat twynne, after this auenture
But in your ſeruyce, thus I wol endure
That as a wreteh vnknow, I wol you ſerue
For euermore, or that myn herte ſterue
Forſake I wol at home myn herytage

And

and as I sayd, ben of your countre a page
If that ye vouchesafe that in this place
Ye graunte me to haue suche a grace
That I may haue, nat but my meate & drinke
And for my sustynaunce yet wol I swynke
Right as you lyst, that Mynos ne no wight
Neyther that he saw me neuer with eyen syght
Ne no man els shal me espye
So slyly, and so wel I shal me gye
And me so wel disfygure, and so lowe (woe
That in this world there shal no man me know
To haue my lyfe, and to haue presence
Of you, that done to me this excellence
And to my father shal I sende here
This worthy man, that is your gayler
And him so guerdon, that he shall well be
One of the greatest men of my countre
And if I durst sayne, my lady bright
I am a kynges sonne, and eke a knyght
As wolde god, if that it myght be
Ye weren in my countrey all thre
And I with you, to beare you companye
Than shuld ye sene if that I therof lye
And if that I profer you in lowe manere
To ben your page, and seruen you right here
But I you serue as lowly in that place
I pray to Mars to yeue me suche grace
That shames deth on me there mote fall
And deth and pouerte to my frendes all
And that my spyrite by nyght mote go
After my deth, and walke to and fro
That I mote of traytour haue a name
For which my spirit mote go, to do me shame
And if I clayme euer other degree
But ye vouchsafe to yeue it me
As I haue sayd, of shames deth I dey
And mercy lady, I can naught els sey
I semely knyght was thys Theseus to se
And yonge, but of twenty yere and thre
But who so had sene his countenaunce
He wold haue wept, for routh of his penaūce
For which this Ariadne in this manere
Answerde to his profre and to his chere
I kynges sonne, & eke a knyght (quod she)
To ben my seruaunt in so lowe degree
God shilde it, for the shame of women al
And sene me neuer suche a cas befal
And sende you grace, and sleight of hert also
You to defende, & knyghtly to sleen your foe
And sene here after I may you synde
To me, and to my suster here so kynde
That I ne repent nat to yeue you lyfe
Yet were it better I were your wyfe
Sithe ye ben as gentyl de me as I
And haue a realme nat but faste by
Than ỳ I suffred your gentylesse to sterue
Or that I let you as a page serue
It is no profyte, as vnto your kynrede
But what is that, ỳ mā wol nat do for dredē
And to my suster syth that it is so
That she mote gone with me, if ỳ I go
Or els suffre deth as wel as I
That ye vnto your sonne as trewly
Done her be wedded, at youre home comyng
This is the fynal ende of all this thyng
Ye swerre it here, vpon all ỳ may be swore
Ye lady myn (quod he) or els to lorne
Wote I be, wt the Mynotaure or to morowe
And haueth here of myn hert blod to borowe
If that ye wol, if I had knyfe or speare
I wolde it letten out, and theron sweare
For than at erste, I wot ye wolde me leue
By Mars, that is chiefe of my beleue
So that I myght lyuen, and nat fayle
To morow for to taken my batayle
I nolde neuer fro this place flye
Tyl that ye shulde the very profe se
For now, if that the soth I shal you say
I haue loued you ful many a day
Though ye ne wyst nat, in my countre
And aldermoste desyred you to se
Of any erthly lyuyng creature
Upon my trouthe I sweare, and you assure
This seuen yere I haue your seruaunt be
Nowe haue I you, and also haue ye me
My dere hert, of Athenes ducheſſe
This lady smyleth at his stedfastnesse
And at his hertely wordes, and at his chere
And to her suster sayd in this manere
And sothely suster myn (quod she)
Nowe be we ducheſſes both I and ye
And syherde to the regals of Athenes
And bothe hereafter lykely to be queenes
And saued fro his deth a kynges sonne
As euer of gentyl women is the wonne
To saue a gentyl man, enforth her myght
In honest cause, and namely in his right
Me thinketh no wight ought vs herof blame
Ne deraen vs therfore an euel name
And shortly of this mater for to make
This Theseus of her hath leaue take
And euery point was performed in dede
As ye haue in this couenaunt herde me rede
His wepen, his clewe, his thig ỳ I haue sayd
Was by the gayler in the house layd
There as the Mynotaure hath his dwellyng

Right fast by the boze, at his entryng
And Theseus is lad vnto his dethe
And forth vnto this Mynotaure he gethe
And by the teachyng of this Adriane
He ouercame this beest, and was his bane
And out he cometh by the clewe agayne
Ful priuely, whan he this beest hath slayne
And the gayler gotten hath a barge
And of his wiues treasure gan it charge
And toke his wyfe, and eke her fader fre
And by the gayler, and with hem al thre
Is stole away out of the londe by nyght
And to the countre of Enopye him dight
There as he had a frende of his knowyng
There feesten they, there daunsen they & syng
And in his armes hath this Adriane
That of the beest hath kepte him fro his bane
And get him there a noble barge anone
And of his countrey folke a ful great wone
And taketh his leaue, & homwarde sayleth he
And in an yle, amydde the wylde see
There as there dwelte creature none
Saue wylde beestes, and that ful many one
He made his shyppe a londe for to sette
And in that yle, halfe a day he lette
And sayd, þ on the londe he must him reste
His marryners haue done right as him leste
And for to tell shortly in this case
Whan Adriadne his wife a slepe was
For that her fader fayzer was than she
He taketh her in his honde, & forth goth he
To shyppe, and as a traytour stale away
Whyle that this Adriadne a slepe lay
And to his countreywarde he sayleth blyue
A twenty dyuel way, the wynde him dryue
And founde his father drenched in the see
We lyste no more to speke of him parde
These false louers, poyson be her bane
But I wol turne agayne to Adriane
That is with slepe for werynesse ytake
Ful sorowfully her herte may awake
Alas, for the myne herte hath pite
Right in the dawnyng awaketh she
And groperh in the bed, & fonde right nought
Alas (quod she) that euer I was wrought
I am betrayed, and her heere to reute
And to the stronde barefote fast she wente
And cryed: Theseus myn hert swete
Where be ye, that I may nat vp you mete
And might thus with beestes ben yslayne
The halowe rockes answerde her agayne
No man she sawe, and yet shone the moone
And hye vpon a rucke she went soone
And sawe his barge, sayling in the see
Colde wexe her herte, & right thus sayd she
Weker than ye, fynde I the beestes wylde
Hath he nat synne, that he her thus begyle
She cryed, o turne agayne for routh & synne
Thy barge hath nat al his meyne inne
Her kercheefe on a pole stycked she
Ascaunce he shulde it wele yse
And him remembze that she was behynde
And turne agayne, & on the stronde her fynde
But al for naught, his way he is gone
And downe she fel a swowne on a stone
And vp she ryste, & kyssed in all her care
The steppes of his fete, there he hath fare
And to her bed right thus she speketh tho
Thou bed (quod she) that hast receyued two
Thou shalt answere of two, and not of one
Where is the greater parte, away gone
Alas, whed shal I wzetched wight become
For though so be that bote none here come
Home to my countrey dare I nat for dzede
I can my selfe in this case nat rede
What shuld I tel mozе her complayntyng
It is so long it were an heuy thyng
In her epystle, Naso telleth all
But shortly to the ende tel I shall
The goddes haue her holpen for pyte
And in the synne of Taurus men may se
The stones of her crowne shyne clere
I wyl no mozе speke of this matere
But thus this false louer can begyle
His trew loue, the dyuel quyt him his wyle.

Here endeth the legende of Ariadne
And here folowerh the legende
of Phylomene.

Thou reuer of the formes, þ hast wrought
The fayre world, & hast it in thy thought
Eternally, er thou thy werke began
Why madest thou bute the slaunder of man
Or al be that it was nat thy doyng
As for that fende, to make suche a thyng
Why suffredest thou that Tereus was borne
That is in loue so false and so forswore
That fro this world vp to the first heuen
Corrumperh, who that folke his name neuen
And as to me, so grisly was his dede
That whan that I this foule storie rede

Syne

Myne eyen weyen foule, and sore also
Yet lasteth the venyme of so longe ago
That enfecteth him, that wolde beholde
The story of Tereus, of which I tolde
Of Trace was he lorde, and kyn to Marte
The cruel god that stante with blody darte
And wedded had he with blysful chere
Kyng Pandyons fayre doughter dere
That hight Progne, floure of her countre
Though Juno lyste nat at the fest be
Ne Hymeneus, that god of weddyng is
Ne at the fest redy ben ywis
The furys thre, with al her mortall brande
The oule al nyght aboute the balkes wonde
That prophete is of wo, and of mischaunce
This teruel, ful of songe and ful of daunce
Lade a fourtenyght, or lytel lasse
But shortly of this story for to passe
(for I am wery of him for to tel)
Fyue yere his wyfe and he togyther dwel
Tyl on a day she gan so sore longe
To sene her suster that she sawe not longe
That for desyre she wyst what to say
Ne to her husbonde gan she for to pray
For goddes loue, that she mote ones gone
Her suster for to sen, and come ayen anone
Or els but she mote to her wende
She prayed him ꝑ he wold after her sende
And this was day by day al her prayere
With al humblesse of wifehode, word & chere
This Tereus let make his shyppes yare
And into Grece hym selfe is forth yfare
Vnto his father in lawe gan he pray
To vouchesafe, that for a moneth or tway
That Philomene his wyues suster myght
On Progne his wife, but ones haue a syght
And she shal come to you agayne anon
Hy selfe with her, I wyl both come & gon
And as my herte lyste I wyl her kepe
This olde Pandion, this kyng gan wepe
For tendernes of hert, for to leue
His doughter gon, and for to reue her leue
Of al this worlde he loued nothyng so
But at the last leaue hath she to go
For Philomene with salte teres eke
Gan of her father grace to beseke
To sene her suster, that her longeth so
And him embraceth, with her armes two
And there also yonge and fayre was she
That whan that Tereus sawe her beaute
And of array, that there was none her lyche
And yet of beaute was she to so ryche
He caste his firy herte vpon her so
That he wol haue her, how so that it go
And with his wyles kneled, and so prayde
Tyl at the last Pandion thus sayde
Nowe sonne (qꝺ he) ꝑ art to me so dere
I the betake my yonge doughter dere
That beareth the key of al myne hertes lyfe
And grete wel my doughter, and thy wyfe
And yeue her leaue somtyme for to play
That she may sene me ones or I dey
And sothly he hath made him riche feest
And to his folke, the moste and eke the leest
That wt him came, & yafe him yeftes grete
And him cõueyeth through the maister strete
Of Athenes, and to the see him brought
And turneth home, no malyce he ne thought
The ores pulleth forth the vessel fast
And in to Trace arryueth at the last
And vp in to a forest he her ledde
And to a caue priuely him spedde
And in this derke caue, if her lyste
Or lyst nought, he bad her for to reste
Of which her hert agroste, and sayd thus
Where is my suster, brother Tereus?
And there withal she wepte tenderly
And quoke for feare pale and pitously
Right as the lãbe, ꝑ of the wolfe is bytten
Or as the culuer, ꝑ of the Egle is smytten
And is out of his clawes forth escaped
Yet it is a ferde, and a wape?
Lest it be bente eftsones. so fare she
But vtterly it maye none other be
By force hath this traytour done a dede
That he hath reft her of her maydenhede
Maugre her heed, by strẽgth & by his myght
Lo here a dede of men, and that a right
She cryeth suster with ful loude steuen
And father dere helpe me god in heuen
Al helpeth nat, and yet this false theefe
Hath done this lady yet a more myschefe
For feare, lest she shulde his shame crye
And done him openly a vyllany
And with his swerde her tonge of kerfe he
And in a castel made her for to be
Ful priuely in prison euermore
And kepte her to his vsage and to his store
So that she ne might neuer more astarte
O sely Philomene, wo is in thyne herte
Huge ben thy sorowes, and wonder smerte
God wreke the, and sende the thy bone
Nowe is tyme I make an ende soone
This Tereus is to his wyfe ycome
And in his armes hath his wife ynome
And pitously he wepte, & shoke his heed

And swore her, that he sholde her suster deed
For which this false Progne hath suche wo
That nygh her sorowful herte brake a two
And thus in teres let I Progne dwell
And of her suster forthe I wol you tel
This wofful lady yerned had in youth
So that she worken and embrauden couth
And weauen in stole the rede woze
And it of women hath be woued yoze
And soothly for to sayne, she hath her fyll
Of mete and drinke, of clothyng at her wyll
And couthe eke rede well ynough and endyte
But with a penne she coulde not write
But letters can she weaue, to and fro
So that by the yere was al a go
She had wouen in a flames large
How she was brought fro Athenes in a barge
And in a caue how that she was brought
And al the thyng that Tereus wrought
She wane it wel, and wrote the story aboue
How she was serued for her susters loue
And to a man a rynge she yaue anon
And prayde him by tygnes for to gon
Unto the quene, and bearen her that clothe
And by signe swore many an othe
She shulde him yene what she gretten myght
This man anon vnto the quene him dyght
And toke it her, and al the maner tolde
And whan p Progne hath this thyng beholde
No worde she spake, for sorow & eke for rage
But fayned her to gon on pilgrymage
To Bacchus temple, and in a stret stounde
Her dombe suster sytryng hath she founde
Wepyng in the castel her selfe alone
Alas the wo, constraynte, and the mone
That Progne vpon her dombe suster maketh
In armes euerych of hem other taketh
And thus I let hem in her sorowe dwell
The remenaunt is no charge to tell
For this is al and some, thus was she ferued
That neuer agylte, ne deserued
Unto this ere wel man, that the of wyste
Ye may beware of men if that you lyste
For al be that he wol nat for shame
Done as Tereus, to lese his name
Ne serue you as a murtherer or a knaue
Ful lyte while shul ye trewe him haue
That wol I sayn, al wer he now my brother
But it so be that he may haue a nother.

Here endeth the legende of Philomene, & here folowyth the legende of Phillis.

BY proue, as well as by auctorite
That wicked feute eleg of a wicked tre
That maye ye fynde, yf it lyketh you
But for this cause, I spekē this as now
To tel you of false Demophon
In loue a falser herde I neuer non
But it were his father Theseus
God for his grace fro suche one kepe vs
Thus seyde women prayen, that it here
Now to the effecte turne I of my matere
Discroyed is of Troye the cyte
This Demophon came sayling in the se
Towarde Athenes, to his palrys large
With him came many a ship, & many a barge
Ful of folke, of which ful many one
Is wounded sore, and sycke, & wo begone
And they haue at the siege longe layne
Behynde him came a wynde, and eke a rayne
That shoke so sore, his sayle might not stonde
Him were leuer than al the worlde alonde
So hunterh him the tempest to and fro
So derke it was, he coulde no where go
And with a waue bruslen was his sterne
His ship was rent so lowe, in such maner
That carpenter coulde it nat amende
The seuoy nyght as any torche brende
For woode, & poffreth him vp and downe
Tyl Neptune hath of him compassioun
And Thetis Chorus, Tryton, & they all
And maden him vp a londe to fall
Where of that Phillis lady was and quene
Lycurgus doughter, fayrer vnto sene
Than is p flour agayne the bright sonne
Unneth is Demophon to londe ywonne
Weake & eke wery, and his folke forpyned
Of werynesse, and also enfampned
And to the deth he was almost ydriuen
His wyfe folke counsayle haue him yeuen
To seken helpe and socour of the quene
And loken what his grace might bene
And maken in that lande some cheuysaunce
And kepen him fro wo, and fro mischaunce
For sycke he was, and almost at the deth
Unneth might he speke, or draw breth
And lyeth in Kodopeya him for to rest
Whā he may walke, him thought it was best
Unto the countre to seken for socour
Wen knewe him wele, & dyd him honour
For at Athenes duke and lorde was he

As Theseus his father hath ybe
That in his tyme was great of renoun
So man so great in al his regyoun
And lyke his father of face and of stature
And falsē of loue, it came him of nature
As doth the foxe Renarde, the foxes sonne
Of kynde he couthe his olde fathers wonne
Without loze, as can a drake swym
When it is caught, & caried to the
This honorable quene Phillis doth
Her lyketh wel his spoxte and his maniere
But I am agroted here before
To write of hem ỳ in loue ben forswoxne
And ete to haste me in my legende
Which to perfoxme, god me grace sende
Therfoze I passe shortly in this wyse
Ye haue wel herde of Theseus the gyse
In the betrayeng of fayre Adriane
That of her pyte kepte him fro his bane
At foxe woxdes, right so Demophon
The same way, & the same pathe hath gon
That did his false father Theseus
For vnto Phillis hath he swoxne thus
To wedden her, and her his trouth plyght
And pyked of her al the good he myght
Whan he was hole & sounde, & had his reste
And doth with Phillis, what so ỳ him leste
As wel I couthe, if that me lyste so
Tellen al his doyng to and fro
He sayde to his countreymote him sayle
For there he wold her weddyng apparayle
As fyt to her honour, and his also
And openly he toke his leaue tho
And to her swoze he wolde not sojourne
But in a moneth agayne he wolde retourne
And in that londe let make his ordynaunce
As hery lozde, and tolde the obeysaunce
Wel and hombly, and his shyppes dyght
And home he goth the nexte way he myght
For vnto Phillis yet came he nought
And that hath she so harde and soze ybought
Alas, as the storỳ doth vs recorde
She was her owne deth with a corde
Whan that she saw ỳ Demophon her trayed
But first wrote she to him, & fast him prayed
He wolde come, and delyuer her of payne
As I reherce shal a woxde or twayne
She lyste not vouchsafe on him to swynke
Dispenden on him a penne ful of ynke
For false in loue was he, right as his syre
The dyuel set her soules bothe on a fyre
But of the letter of Phillis wol I wxite
I woxde or twayne, although it be but lyte

Thyne hostesse (qō she) O Demophon
Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon
Of Rhodopeye, vpon you mote complayne
Ouer the terme set betwyxt vs twayne
That ye ne holden forwarde, as ye sayde
Your anere, which ye in our hauen layde
Right vs, that ye wolde comen out of doubt
Or that the moone ones went about
But tymes four, the moone hath hyd her face
Sens thilke day ye went fro this place
And four tymes lyght the woxlde agayne
But for al that, yet shal I sothly sayne
Yet hath the streme of Scython nat brought
Fro Athenes the shyp, yet came it nought
And if that ye the terme reken wolde
As I or other trewe louers do sholde
I playne nat (god wot) before my day
But al her letter wxiten I ne may
By order, for it were to me a charge
Her letter was right longe, and therto large
But here and there, in ryme I haue it layde
There as me thought that she hath wel saide
She sayd, the sayles cometh nat agayne
Ne to the woxde, there nys no fey certayne
But I wot why ye come nat (qō she)
For I was of my loue to you so free
And of the goddes that ye haue swoze
That her vengeaunce fall on you therfoze
Ye be nat sufficaunt to beare the payne
To moche trusted I, wel may I sayne
Vpon your lynage, and your fayre tonge
And on your teeres, falsly out wronge
Howe coude ye wepe so by craftes (qō she)
Nay there suche teeres fayned be
Nowe certes, if ye wolde haue in memoxye
It ought be to you but lytel gloxye
To haue a fryl mayde thus betrayde
To god (qō she) pray I, & ofte haue prayde
That it be nowe the greatest pyce of all
And most honour, ỳ euer you shal befall
And whan thyne olde aunceters paynted be
In which men may her woxthynesse se
Than pray I god, thou paynted be also
That folke may reden, forth by as they go
Lo this is he, that with his flattery
Betrayed hath, and done her villany
That was his trewe loue, in thought & dede
But sothly of o poynt yet may they rede
That ye ben lyke your father, as in this
For he begyled Ariadne ywis
With such an art, and suche subtrite
As thou thy selues hast begyled me
As in that poynt, although it be nat feyre

Thus folowed certayne, and art his herte
But seng thus sykfully ye me begyle
My body mote ye sene, within a while
Right in the hauen of Athenes sterying
Wythouten sepulture and buriens
Though ye ben harder than is any stone
And whan this letter was forth sent anone
And knewe how brotil & how false he was
She for dispayre forbyd her selfe, alas
Suche sorowe hath she, for she beset her so
Beware, ye women of your subtyl foe
Sens yet this day, men may ensample se
And trusteth nowe in loue no man but me.

Here endeth the legende of Phillis,
and here folowyth the legende
of Hypermestre.

In Grece whylom weren' bretherne two
Of whiche that one was called Danao
That many a sonne hath of his body wonne
As suche false louers oft conne
Among his sonnes al there was one
That aldermost he loued of euerychone
And whan this child was borne, this Danao
Hyght him a name, and called him Lyno
That other brother called was Egyste
That was of loue as false as euer him lyste
And many a doughter gate he in his lyfe
Of whiche he gate vpon his rygbt wyfe
A doughter here, and dyd her for to call
Hypermestra, yongest of hem all
The whiche childe of her natyuyte
To al good thewes borne was she
As lyked to the goddes or she was borne
That of the shefe she shulde be the corne
The werdes that we clepen destyne
Hath shapen her, that she must nedes be
Vertous, sadde, wyse, true as stele
And to this woman it accordeth wele
For though þ Venus yaue her great beaute
With Jupiter compowned so was she
That conscience, trouth, & drede of shame
And of her wifehode for to kepe her name
This thought her was felycite as here
And eeke Mars, was that tyme of the yere
So feble, that his maiyce is him rafte
Repressed hath Venus his cruel crafte
And what is Venus, and other oppression
Of houses, Mars his beryn is a don
That Hypermestre hare nat handle a knyfe
In maiyce, though she shulde lese her lyfe
But natheless, as herein gan tho turne
Two bad aspectes, hath she of Saturne
That made her to dye in pryson
And I shal after make mencion
Of [illegible] and Egyptes also
And [illegible]gh so be that they were brethyr two
For tyme tyme was spared no lynage
It lyked hem to maken mariage
Betwixt Hypermestre, and him Lyno
And casten suche a day it shal be so
And ful accorded was it verily
The aray is wrought, the tyme is fast by
And thus Lyno hath of his fathers brother
The doughter wedded, & eth of hē hath other
The torches brennen, the lampes bryght
The sacrifyce ben ful redy dight
Thensence out of the fyre reketh soote
The flour the leefe, is rent vp by the roote
To maken garlandes and crowones hye
Ful is the place of sounde of mynstralcye
Of longes amorous of maryage
As thilke tyme was the playne vsage
And this was in the paleys of Egyste
That this house was lord, right as him lyste
And thus that day they dryuen to an ende
The fredes taken leue, and home they wende
The nyght is come, the bryde shal go to bedde
Egyste to his chambre fast him spedde
And prively let his doughter call
Whan that the house voyded was of hem all
He loketh on his doughter with glad chere
And to her spake, as ye shall after here
My ryght doughter, tresour of myn herte
Sens first þ day, þ shapen was my therte
Or by the fatall fusten had my bone
So nye myne herte neuer thyng ne come
As thou Hypermestre, doughter dere
Take hede what thy father sayth the here
And werke after thy wyser euer mo
For alderfirst doughter, I loue the so
That al the world to me nys halfe so lefe
Ne nolde rede the to thy mischefe
For al the good vnder the colde moone
And what I mene, it shal be sayd right soone
With protestacion, as sayne these wyse
That but thou do, as I shal the deuyse
Thou shalt be deed, by him þ al hath wrought
Ne shorte wordes thou ne scapest nought
Out of my paleys, or that thou be deed
But thou consent, and werke after my reed

Take

Take this to the fearful conclusyon
This hypermister caste her eyen doun
And quoke as doothe the leefe of eyther greene
Pered wexte her hewe, & like as a shen to sene
And sayd: lorde and father al your wyll
After my might, god wote I shal fulfyll
So it be to me no confusyon
I nyl (qō he) haue none exception
And out he caught a knyfe, as rasour kene
Hyde thys (qō he) that it be nat yseene
And whan thyn husbonde is to bedde go
Whyle that he slepeth, cut his throte a two
For in my dreme it is warned me
Howe that my nevewe shal my bane be
But whiche I not, wherfore I wol be syker
Therfore say nay, wel two shall haue a byker
As I haue sayd, by hym that I haue swore
This hypermister hath nigh her wit forlorn
And for to passen harmelesse out of that place
She graunted him, ther was non other grace
And withal a rostrel taketh he tho
And sayd, herof a draught or two
Yeue him drynke, whan he goth to reste
As he shal slepe as longe as euer the leste
The narcotykes and opies ben so stronge
And go thy way, lest that him thinke to longe
Out cometh the bride, al with ful sobre chere
As is of maydens ofte the manere
To chambre brought, with revel & with soge
And shortly, lesse this tale be to longe
This Lino and she both brought to bedde
And every wight out at the doore him spedde
The night is waned, and he fel a slepe
Ful tenderly begynneth she to wepe
She syst her up, and dredefully she quaketh
As doth the braunche, that zephirus shaketh
And bothe were al in dragone that syte
As colde as any froste nowe weyeth she
For pyte by the herte strayned her so
And drede of dethe dothe her so muche wo
That thrise down she fil, in suche a were
She rise her up, & stakereth here and there
And on her handes faste loketh she
Alas, shal myn handes bloody be
I am a mayde, and as by my nature
And by my semblaunt, and by my vesture
Myn hondes ben nat shapen for a knyfe
As for to reue no man fro hys lyfe
What dyuel haue I with the knyfe to do
And shal I haue my throte corue a two
Than shal I blede alas, and be shende
And nedes this thing mote haue an ende
Or he or I mote nedes lese our lyfe
Nowe certes (qō she) sens I am his wyfe
And hath my fayth, yet is it bette for me
For to be dede, in wyfely honeste
Than be a traytour, lyuing in my shame
Be as be may, for ernest or for game
He shal awake, and ryse and go hys way
Out at this gutter, er that it be day
And wepte ful tenderly vpon his face
And in her armes gan hym to embrace
And him she roggeth, and awaketh softe
And at the wyndowe lepe he fro the lofte
Whan she hath warned hym, & don him bote
Thys Lino swifte was, and light of fote
And from her ran, a ful good paas
This sely woman is so weake, alas
And helpeleſſe, so that er she ferre went
Her cruel father dyd her for to hent
Alas Lino, why arte thou so vnkynde
Why ne hast thou remembred in thy mynde
And taken her, & ledde her forth with the
For when she sawe that gone away was he
And that she might nat so faste go
Me folowen hym, she sate downe right tho
And tyl she was caught, and fettred in prison
This tale is sayd for this conclusyon.

¶ Thus endeth the legendes of good women, and here foloweth a balade of Chaucer.

¶ A goodly balade of Chaucer.

Mother of noture, best beloued of al
And fresh floure, to whō good thrifte god sende
Your child, if it lust you me so to cal
Al be I vnable my selfe so to pretende
To your discrecion I recomende
Myn hert and al, with euery circumstaunce
Al holly to be vnder your gouernaunce,

Most desire I, and haue, and euer shal
Thing, which might your hertes ease amende
Haue me excused, my power is but smal
Nathelesse of right ye ought to cōmende
My good wyl, which fayne wolde entende
To do you seruyce, for al my suffysaunce,
Is holly to be vnder your gouernaunce

Wreke vnto herte: whiche neuer shal
Be fre the a newe, & right glad to dispende
My tyme in your seruyce, what so befal
Beseechyng your excellence to defende
My simplenesse, yf ignoraunce offende
In any wyse, syth that myn allyaunce
Is holly to ben vnder your gouernaunce

Dayly of lyght, bery grounde of comforte
The sunnes doughter (ye bight) as I rede
For whē he westreth, farwel your disporte
By your nature anone ryght for pure drede
Of ỳ rude night, ỳ with his boystous wede
Of darkenesse, shadoweth our emyspere
Then closen ye, my lyues lady dere

Dawonyng the day, so his bynde resorte
And ỳheb⁹ your father, ỳ his stremes rede
Adorneth the morowe, consuminge the sorte
Of milky clondes, that wolden ouerlede
Trewe humble herres, with her milky hede
Nere comfort a dayes, when eyen clere
Disclose and spyede my lyues lady dere

Je bouldray: but great god disposeth
And maketh casuel by his prouydence
Suche thynge, as mans frele wit purposeth
Al for the best, yt that your conscience
Not grutche it, but in humble pacience
It receyue, for god sayth without fable
A faythful herte euer is acceptable

Cautels, who so vseth gladlye gloseth
To eschewe suche it is right high prudence
What ye sayd ones, myn herte opposeth
That my writyng Japes in your absence
Pleased you muche better than my presence
Yet can I more, ye be not excusable
A faythful herte euer is acceptable

Quaketh my penne, my spirite supposeth
That in my writing ye finde woll som offēce
Myn herte weikneth thus sone, anon it riseth
Nowe hotte, nowe colde, and efte in feruence
That mysse is, is caused of negligence
And not of malyce, therfore beth merciable
A faythful herte euer is acceptable

¶ Lenuoye.

For cōplayne, forth lacking eloquence
For lytel lerned of endytynge laine
I haue besought my ladyes sapience
Of thy behalfe, to accepte in gaine
Thyn inabilyte, do thou the laine
Abyde, haue more yet: Je serue Jouely
Now forth, I close the in holy Clemens name
The shal vnclose my heres gourmesse

¶ Thus endeth this balade: And
here followeth the boke of
Boecius de consola-
cione philosophie.

Boecius de conso lacione phi losophie

Carmina qui quondam studio florentis peregi
Flebilis heu mestos cogor inire modos.

ALas, I weping am constrayned to begyn bers of sorowefull matter, that whylom in florysshynge studye made delytable dytees. For lo, rendynge muses of poetes, endyten to me thynges to be writen, and dirty ierres.
At last nō drede ne myght ouercome tho maistes, that they ne were felowes and folowers my way, that is to say: whan I was exiled, they ỳ weren of my yourthe whylom worthy and grene, comforten now sorowful wirdes of me olde man: for elde is comen vnwarely vpon me, hasted by the harmes that I haue, and sorowe hath cōmanded his age to be in me. Heres boye aren shadde ouergrymeyed vpon my herd: and the slacke skynne trembleth of myn emptied body. Thylke deth of men is welefull, ỳ ne cometh nat in veres that be swet, but cometh to wretches ofte icleped. Alas, alas, with how deef an eere deth cruel turneth awaye fro wretches, & nayeth for to close weping eyen. While fortune vnfaythful fauoured me with light goodes, ỳ sorowful houre, that is to saye, the derke, had almost dreynt myn herd: But nowe for fortune cloudy hath chaūged her deceyuable chere to me ward, myne vnpyrrous lyfe draweth along vngreable dwelliges. O ye my frēdes, what or wherto auaunted ye me to ben welful for he that hath fallen, stode in no stedfast degre.

per dum mecū tacitus ipse reputarem,
querimoniamq; lacrimabilē stili officio de-
signatam: assitisse mihi supra verticem visa
ē mulier reuerendi admodū vultus, oculis
ardentibus, et vitra communem.&c.

IN the meane whyle that I stil recorded these thin-
ges in my seife, & mar-
ked my wepely cōplaint
with office of poyn-
tell: I saugh stondynge
aboue the hyght of myn
hed, a womā of ful gret
reuerence, by semblaūt. Her eyen byennyng,
and clere, seynge ouer the commen myght of
mene, with a lyuely colour, and with suche
vigour & strengthe, that it ne myght not ben
wemned, al were it so that she were ful of so
gret age, that men ne wolden nat trowen in
no maner that she were of our elde.

The stature of her was of doutous
iudgemente, for somtyme she constrayned
and shronke her seluen lyke to the cōmen me-
sure of men: And somtyme it semed that she
touched the heuen with the hight of her hed.
And whan she houe her hed hyer, she perced
the seife heuen, so that the sight of men lokig
was in ydel: her clothes were maked of right
fyn thredes and subtel crafte of perdurable
matierr. The whiche clothes she hed wouen
with her own hondes, as I knewe wel after
by her seife declaring, and shewing to me the
beaute: the which clothes a derkenes of a for-
lorn and dispised elde had dusked & derked,
as it is wōt to derke by smoked ymages. In
ȳ nethereste hēme or bordour of these clothes,
mette ywouen therin a grekishe Π. that
signifieth the life Actiue, and aboue that let-
ter in the hyeste bordure a grekyshe Θ. that
signifieth the lyfe contemplatyfe. And by-
twē these two letters ther wer sene degrees
ordely wrouȝt in maner of ladders, by which
degrees men myght climben from the ney-
therest letter to ȳ vppereste: natheleſſe hādes
of some men hadden kerue that clothe by vio
lence or by strength, and euerich man of hem
had borne away such peces as he might geten
And forforth this forsayd wooman bare sinale
bokes in her right hande, & in her lefte hande
she bare a sceptre. And whan she sawe these
poetical muses approchyng aboute my bed,
and enditynge wordes to my weppynges, she
was a lytel amoued, and glowed with cruel
eyen. Who (quod she) hath suffred approchen
to this sicke man these comen strompettes, of
which is the place, that men callen Theatre,
the which only ne aswagen nat his sorowes
with remedies, but they wold feden and non-
rische hym with swete venym. For soothe that
ben tho that with thornes and prickynges of
talētes of affections, which that ben nothing
fructuous nor profytable, distroyē the corne
plentuous of fruites of reason. For they hol-
den hertes of men in vsage, but they ne deliu-
uer no folke fro maladyes. But if the muses
had withdrawē fro me with your flatteryes
any an vncommynge and vnprofytable man,
as ben wonte to synde comenly amonge the
people, I wold wel suffre the lasse greuously.
For why, in suche an vnprofitable man, myn
ententes were nothinge endamaged. But ye
withdrowen fro me this man, that hath ben
nourysshed in my studyes or scoles of Elea-
ticis and of Achademicis in Grece. But goth
nowe rather away ye mermaydens, whiche
that ben swete tyl it be at the laste, & suffreth
this mā to be cured and heled by my muses,
that is to saye, by my noteful sciences. And
thus this company of muses yblamed, casten
wrothly the chere downwarde to the erthe &
shewing by rednesse her shame, they passeden
sorowfully the threshold. And I of whome
the syght plounged in teeres was derked, so
that I ne might nat know, what that womā
was of so imperiall auctorite, I worte all a-
bashed and stonied, and cast my sight downe
to the erthe, & began styll for to abyde what
she wolde done afterwarde. Than came she
nere, & set her down vpon the vtereste corner
of my bed, and she beholdynge my chere that
was caste to the erthe, heauy and greuous of
wepyng, cōplayned with these wordes (that
I shal sayne) ȳ perturbacion of my thought.

Heu quam precipiti mersa profūdo, Mens
habet, et propria luce relicta Tendit ad exter
nas ire tenebras, Terrenis quoties fluctibus
acta, Crescit in imanem noxia cura. Hic
quondā celo liber aperto.&c.

ALas, howe the thoughte of
this man dreynt in ouerthro-
wynge depnesse, dulleth and
forleteth his propre clerenesse,
myntynge to gone into for-
ayne derkenesse, as oft as his
anoyous busynes wexeth without measure,
that is driuen with worldelye wyndes.
This man that whilom was free, to whome
the

the heuen was open and knowen, and was wonte to gone in hyenly partes, and ſawe the lyghtneſſe of the reed ſonne, and beheelde the ſterres of the colde moone, & which ſterre in heuen vſeth wandryng recourſes yliyke by dyuers ſpheres. This mā ouercomer had comprehended al thys thynge by numbre of acomptyng in aſtronomye. And ouer this he was wont to teken the cauſes, whēre ỳ ſownynge windes mouen, and beſyen the ſmothe wonter of the ſee. And what ſpirite turneth the ſtable heuē. And why the ſterre riſeth out of the reed eſte, to fallen in ỳ weſtren waues. And what attēpreth the luſtye houres of the firſt ſommer ſeaſon, and highteth and appareyleth the erth with roſy floures. And who maketh the plumtuous Autumpne in ful peres fleteren with heuy grapes. And eke thys man was wonte to tell the dyuers cauſes of nature that were hydde. Alas how lightly is empted the lyght of his thought, & hys necke is preſſed with heuy chaynes, and bereth his chere enclyned adowne for the great weight, and is cōſtrayned to loken on the foule erthe.

Sed magis medicine (inquit) tempus eſt quā querele. Boe. Tum vero totis in me intenta luminibus. Philo. Tu ne ille es (ait) qui noſtro quondam lacte nutritus, noſtris educatus alimentis, in virilis animi robur euaſeras. &c.

But tyme is nowe of medicine (quod ſhe) more than cōplaint. Forſoth thā ſhe entēdynge to me warde with al the lokyng of her eyen ſayd. Art not thou he (quod ſhe) that whylom I nouryſhed with my mylke, and foſtred with my metes, were eſcaped and commen to the corage of a parfayte man?

Certes I yaue ỳ ſuch armours, ỳ if thou thy ſelfe ne haddeſt firſt caſt hem away, they ſhul dewhaue defended the in ſikerneſſe, that may not be ouercomen. Knoweſt thou nat me? why art thou ſtylleis it for ſhame or for aſtonieng? it were me leuer it were for ſhame, but it ſemeth me that aſtonyeng hath oppreſſed the. And whan ſhe ſawe me nat onely ſtyll, but rather without office of tonge & al dōde, ſhe layde her hande ſoftely vpon my breſte, and ſayde: Here is no peryll (quod ſhe) he is fallen in to a lytrage, which that is a comune ſickenes to hertes that dē diſeaſed. He hath a lytel forgeten hym ſelfe. But certes he ſhal lyghtly remembren himſelfe, yf ſo be that he hath knowen me er nowe. And that he may done ſo, I wyl wype his eyen a lytel that he derked by ỳ cloude of mortal thinges. Thā wordes ſayd ſhe, & with the lappe of her garnement yplited i a trouce ſhe dried myn eyen that weren ful of ỳ wawes of my wepinge.

Tunc me diſcuſſa liquerunt nocte tenebre, Luminibusq; prior redit vigor. Vt cum precipiti glomerārur ſidera choro, Nimbiſq; polus ſterit imbribus, Sol latet, ac non dum celo venientibus aſtris &c.

Thus whan that myght was diſcuſſed awaye, derkenes forgete me, and to my eyen repayred agayne her firſt ſtrengthe. And right as by enſample, as the ſon is hyd whē the ſterres ben couerde with cloudes, by a ſwift wynde that hyght Chorus, & the firmament ſtante derked by wete plungy cloudes. And that the ſterres nat apperen vpon the heuen, ſo that the myght ſemed ſprad vpon the erthe. If than the wynde that hyght Boreas, yſente out of the caue of the countreye of Trace, breketh thys myght, that is to ſayne chaſeth it awaye, and diſconereth the cloſed daye. Than ſhyneth Phebus ſhadowleſs with ſodayne lyght, & ſmyteth with his bremes in merueylyng eyen.

Haud aliter triſticie nebulis diſſolutis, hauſi celum, et ad cognoſcendam medicamtis faciem, mentem recepi. Itaq; vbi in eam deduxi oculos, intuitumq; defixi, reſpicio nutricem meam, in cuius ab adoleſcentia &c.

Right ſo & none other wyſe, the cloudes of ſorowe diſſolued and done awaye, I tok heuen and receiued myndes to knowē the face of my phyſycien: ſo that I ſette myne eyen vpon her and faſtened my lokynge. I beheelde my norryce philoſophie in whoſe houſe I had conuerſed fro my youthe, and I ſayde thus. O thou mayſtreſſe of al vertues deſcended from the ſouerayn ſete, why art thou comen in to this ſolytary place of myn exile? Arte thou comen for thou arte made compable with me of falſe blames. O (quod ſhe) my norryce, ſhulde I forſake the nowe, & ſhulde I not

I not parted with the by comen trauaile the charge that thou hast suffred for enuy of my name. Certes it were nat leful ne stirynge to philosophie to leten without companye the way of him that is innocent: Shulde I than drdout my blame, and agrise as though ther wer befallen a new thyng. For trowest thou that Philosophie be nowe alder first assailed in perils by folke of wicked maner. Haue I nat striuen with full great strife in olde tyme before the age of my Plato, ayenst the foolehardynesse of folye. And eke the same Plato liuing, his maister Socrates deserued victorye of vnrightful dethe in my presence. The heritage of þ whiche Socrates, the heritage is to sayne the doctryne, of the which Socrates in hys opynyon of felicyte, that I cleape welefulnesse: whan that the people of Epycuriens and Stoiciens, and many other enuyed them to go rauyshe, euery man for his parte, that is to sayne: that euerych of hem wolde drawen to the defence of hys opinyon the wordes of Socrates. They as in partye of their praye to drowen me cryeng and debatyng therrayenst, and corueu and renten my clothes that I had wouen with myne owne handes. And with tho clothes that they had raced out of my clothes they wenten away, wening that I had gon with hem euery dele. In which Epycuriens and Stoiciens for as muche as there semed some traces & steppes of my habyte. The folye of wenyng tho Epicuriens and stoiciens my familiers, peruerted some through the errour of þ wiked multytude of hem: Thys is to sayne, for they semed philosophers, they weren pursued to þ dethe and slayne. So if thou haste not knowen the exilynge of Anaxagoras, ne the enpoysoning of Socrates, ne the turmentes of Zeno, for they weren straungers, yet mightest thou haue knowen the Senecas, the Canios, and the Sozanos: Of whiche folke the renõme is neyther ouer olde ne vnsolempne. The whiche men nothyng eis ne brought to the deth, but only for they were enformed of my maners, and semeden most vnlyke to the studies of wicked folke. And for thy thou oughtest nat to wondren, though that I in þ bitter see be drinen with tempestes blowing aboute. In the which thys is my moste purpose, that is to sayne to displesen wicked mẽ. Of whiche shrewes al be the hoost neuer so great, it is to dispise, for it is not gouerned with no leader of reason, but it is rauyshed onely by flerynge errour, folily and lightlye. And if they somtyme make an hooste ayenst vs, assayle vs as strenger: our leder draweth to gyther his richesses into his tour, and they ben ententyfe aboute sarpleris or sachelles vnprofitable for to taken. But we that ben hygh abouen, siker from al tumulte & woode noyse, warnestored and enclosed in suche a paleys, whither as þ clateryngе or anoyenge foly may nat attayne, we scorne suche raueners and henters of foulest thynges.

Quisquis composito serenus euo, Fatum sub pedibus egit superbum: Fortunamq; tuens vtramq; rectus, Inuictum potuit tenere vultum. &c.

Who so it be that stere of vertue, sad, and well ordinate of lyuynge, that hath put vnder foote the proude wyerdes, & lokerh vpryght vpon eyther fortune, he maye holden hys chere vndiscomfyted.

The rages ne the manaces of the see commouyng and chasynge vnware heate from the bottome, ne shall not moue that manne, ne the vnstable mountayne that hyght Vesenus, that writheth out through his broke chimeneyes smokyng fyres, ne the way of thonder leyte, that is wont to smiten high tourres ne shal nat moue that manne. Whereto than wretches drede ye tyrauntes, that ben wode and felonnous with any strengthe. Hope after nothynge, ne drede thou not: and so shalte thou disarmen the ire of thylke vnmighty tyraunte. But who that quakynge dredeth or desyreth thyng that is not stable of his right that man that so dothe hath cast awaye hys shylde, and is remoued fro hys place, and enlaseth hym in the chayne, with the whiche he may be drawen.

Sentis ne (inquit) hec atq; animo illabuntur tuo. Expers ne es lyre. Quid fles. Quid lachrimis manas. Si operam medicantis expectas, oportet vt vulnus detegas tuum. &c.

Eclyste thou (quod she) these thynges. and entren they aught in thy corage. Art thou lyke an asse to the harpe. Why wepest thou. Why spyllest thou teres

ferunce. If ȳ abydest after helpe of thy leche, the behoueth discouer thy wounde. Tho I had gathered strength in my corage and answerd & sayd. And nedeth it (qd I) of rehersing or of amonicion, & shewerth it not ynough by hym self the sharpenesse that werreth wode ayenst me. Ne mouerth it nat the to se the face or the maner of this place? Is this the library that thou haddest chosen for a right certayn sege to the in myne house, there as thou disputest oft with me of the science of thinges, touching diuinite and touching mākynde? Was than myn habite suche as it is nowe? was my face or chere such as is now, whā I sought with the secretes of nature, whē thou enformedest my maners and the reason of all my lyfe, to thensample of the ordre of heuen? is not this the guerdō that I referre to the, to whom I haue be obeysaunt? Certes ȳ enformedest by the mouth of Plato this sentence, that is to sayne: that comen thynges or communalites weren blisful, if they that had studied al fully to wisdom gouerneden thilke thynges: or elis if it so befel that the gouernours of comunalites studyen to get wisdome. Thou saydest ehe by the mouthe of the sayd Plato, that it was a necessary cause, wise mē to taken and desyren the gouernaūce of comen thynges, for that the gouernementes of cyries yielde i the handes of felonous tourmentours, cytezins ne shulden not bringen in pestilence and distruction to good folke. And therfore I folowyng thylke auctours desired to put forth in execution & in acte of comen adminystracion thylke thynges, that I had lerned of the amonge my secrete reding whiles, thou and god that put in the thoughtes of wyse folke, ben knowyng with me, ȳ nothyng ne brought me to maistrye or dignite but the comen studye of all goodnesse. And therfore cometh it that betwene wicked folke and me haue ben greuous discordes, ȳ ne myghten not be released by prayers: for this liberte hath ȳ fredome of conscience, that the wratthe of moze myghty folke hath alway ben dispised of me for sauacion of right. Howe ofte haue I resysted and withstande that man that hight Canigast, that made alway thassaute ayenst the prosper fortunes of poore feeble folke? Howe ofte haue I put of or caste out hym Triguyl prouost of the kynges house, bothe of thy wronges that he had begonne to done, and eke fully perfozmed? Howe often haue I couered & defended by the auctozyte of my put ayenst perils, that is to sayne: put myne auctozite in peryl for the wretched poze folke that the courtyse of straungers vnpunysshed turmented alway with mistrales and gyuasiers out of nombre? Neuer man yet drew me fro right to wronge. Whan I sawe the fortunes and the richesses of the people of prouynces ben harmed and amenused, either by pray cannes or by contek tributes or carriages, as sozy was I as they that suffred the harme. Glose. Whan that Theodozike kynge of Gothes in a deed yere had his graners full of corne, and commaunded that no man shulde bye no corne tyll hys corne were solde, & at a greuous dere pryse: Boece withstode that ordinaunce, and ouercame it, knowing al this the kyng Theodozike him self. Coempcio is to saye comen achate or byeng togyther, that were establisshed vpon the people by suche a maner imposityon, as who so bought a bushel of corne, he muste yeuen the kynge the fyfthe parte. Textus. Whan I was in the soze hongry tyme, there was established greuous and vnprofytable corruption, that men sene wel it shulde greatly empeiren and endomagen all the prouynce of Campayne. I toke stryfe ayenst the prouost of the pretorie for the comē profyte. And the knowyng of it, I ouercame it, so that the corruption was not asked ne toke effecte.

Paulyne a counsaylour of Rome, the richesses of the whiche Paulyne the bondes of the paleys, that is to saye, thofficers wolden haue devoured by hope & courtysie: yet drowe I out of the iowes of hem that gapedē. And for as muche as the payne of the accusacion a iudged before ne shulde not sodaynly hyen ne punishen wrongefully Albyn a counsaylour of Rome, I put me ayenst the daūs and indignacyons of the accusour Cipriam. Is it not than ynough sens that I haue purchased great discordes ayenst my selfe? But I ought be more assured ayenst other folke, that for the loue of ryghtwisnesse I neuer ne serued nothyng to my selfe, to hem wardes of the kynges hall, by whiche I were the more syker. But through the same accusours accusynge I am condempned. Of the nombre of whiche accusours one Basilius that whilome was chased out of the kynges seruyce, is nowe compelled in accusyng of my name, for nede of sozayne mouye. Also Opilyon

and

and Saudericus haue accused me: All be it so that the iustice regall had whylom demed them bothe to goon in to exyle for her trespeces and fraudes without nombre. To which iudgement they nolde nat obey, but defended hem by the sykernesse of holy houses, that is to sayne, stedden in to seyntewary: And than whan this was apperceyued by the kynge, he commaunded but if they boyded the cyte of Rauenne by certayne daye assygned, that menne shulde marken hem on the forheed with an hote yren, and chasen hem out of the towne. Now what thing semeth myght be lykened to thys iurie, for certes this same daye was receyued the accusyng of my name by thylke same accusours. What may be sayd hereto hath my studye and my conuynge deserued thus, as cis the forsayde dampnacyon of me made them ryghtefull accusours or no. Was nat fortune a shamed of thys. Certes al had nat fortune ben a shamed that innocence was accused, yet ought she haue had shame of the fylthe of myne accusours. But aske thou in some of what gylte I am accused. Men sayne that I wouilde sauen the companye of the senatours. And defyzest thou to heren in what maner I am accused, that I shuld haue disturbed the accusour to beaten letters, by which he shuld haue made the senatours gylty ayenst the kynges royal maieste. O mayster, what demest thou of this? shall I forsake this blame, that I ne be no shame to the? Certes I haue wolde it (that is to saye) the sauacion of the senate, ne I shall neuer lette to wyne it, and that I confesse and am a knowe, but therentent of the accusoure to ben disturbed shal cease. Shal I clepe that a felonye or a synne that I haue defyzed the sauacion of the ordre of the senate. And certes had thilke same senate done through her decretes and her iudgemēts as though it were a synne and a felony, that is to wyne the sauacion of them. But solve that lyeth alway to him selfe, may not chaūge the merite of thynges, ne I trowe not by the iudgemente of Socrates that it were lefull to me to hyde the sothe, ne assente to lesynges: but certes howe so euer it be of this, I put it to gessen or prisen of the iugement of the and of wyse folke, of whyche thynge all the ordynaunce and the sothe (for as moche as folke that ben to comen after oure dayes shall knowen it) I haue put it in scripture and in remembraunce. For touchyng the letters falsely made, by whyche letters I am accused to haue hoped the fredom of Rome, what apertayneth me to speken thereof. Of whyche letters the fraude had ben shewed apertely, yf I had had libertye for to haue bled and bene at confessyon of myne accusours, the whyche thynge in all nedes hath great strength. For what other fredome may men hopen? Certes I wold that some other fredom might be hoped, I wold the haue answerd by the wordes of a man that hyght Camus: for whan he was accused of Canyus, Cesar Germanes sonne, that he was knowynge and consentyng of a coniuracion ymade ayenst him. This Canius answered thus: yf I had wyste it, thou haddest not wyst it. In which thyng sorowe hath not so dulled my wytte, that I playne onely that shrewde folke apparaylen felonyes against vertue, but I wōder greatly how that they may perfourme thinges that they haue hoped for to done, for why ne wyl ne shreudnesse that cometh paraventure of our defaute. But it is lyke a monstre and a meruayle howe that in the present syght of god, may bene achyeued and perfourmed suche thynges, as euery felonous manne hath conceyued in hys thought agaynst innocentes. For whych thynge one of thy famylyers not vnskylfully asked thus. Yf God is: whence comen wicked thynges. But al had it ben lefful that felonous folke, that now desyren the bloode and the deth of al good men. And eke of the Senate, haue wyned to gone distroyen me, whome they hime sene alwaye baraylen and defenden good men, and eke al the senate, that had nat deserued of the fathers (that is to sayne of the senatours) that they shulden wyl my dystruction. Thou remembrest wel as I gesse, that whan I wold done or sayne anye thynge, thou thy selfe alwaye presente ruledest me. At the eyre of Uetone whan that the kynge, gredy of comen slaughter, caste hym to transporten vpon all the order of the senate the gylte of hys royall maiestye, of the whiche gylte that Albyn was accused, with howe great sykernesse of peryl to me, defended I all the senate: Thou wottest well that I saye sothe, ne I ne auaunced me neuer in prayisynge of my selfe. For alway whan any wyght receyueth precyous renome in auaunteynge of hym selfe or hys werkes, he amenuiseth the secree of his conscyence.

But nowe thou mayste well seue to what ende I am comen for myne innocencye, I receyue payne of falle felonye, for gwerdone of very verrus. And what open confessyon of felonye had euer iudges so accordaunte in crueltè, that is to sayne, as myne accusynge hath, that eyther errour of mannes wytte, or els cõdicion of fortune, that is vncertain to al mortall folke ne submytted some of hem, that is to say, that it ne enclyned some iuge to haue pyte or compassion. For although I had bene accused that I wold bzenne holy houses, and strangle pzielles with wycked swerde, or that I had greythed deth to al good men, algates the sentence shuld haue punished me pzesent confessed & conuicte. But nowe I am remoued from the eyte of Rome almoste .v.C.M. paas, I am without defence dampned to pzoscripcion and to derthe, for the studies & bounties that I haue don to the senate. But o wel ben they worthye of merite, as who sayethe: nay there might yet neuer none of hem be conuicte of suche a blame as myne is. Of whiche crespace myn accusours seen ful wel the dignite, for they wold derken it with medyng of some felonye. They baren me on honde and sayd, that I had polute and defouled my conscience with sacrilege for couetise of bygnite: and certes thou thy selfe that arte planted in me, chacedest out of the siege of my corage all conetyse of mortall thynges, ne sacrylege ne had no leaue to haue a place in me before thin eyen. For thou dzoppedest euery day in myne eeres & in my thought thylke commaundemẽt of Pythagoras, that is to say: Men shall serue to god, and not to goddes. Se it was not conuenient ne none nede to taken helpe of the foulest spirites, I that thou haste ordeigned and sette in suche excellence, that thou madest me lyke to god, and ouer thys the right cleane secrete chambze of myn house, that is to saye my wyfe, and the companye of myne honeste frendes, and my wines father, as wel holy as worthy to be reuerensed for his dedes, defenden me from all suspecryon of suche blame. But oh malyce. For they that accusen me taken of the philosophie feyth of so gret blame, for they trowen that I haue hadde affinite to malefyce or enchaũtement, bicause that I am replenished and fulfilled with thy techynges and enformed of thy maners. And thus it suffiseth not onely þ thy reuerence ne auelle me naughte, but yf thou of thy frewyll rather be blemyshed with myne offencyon. But vnto the harmes that I haue, there betideth yet this encrease of harme, that the gessynge and the iugement of muche folke ne loken no thyng to the desertes of thynges, but only to the auenture of fortune, and iudgen that only such thinges ben purueied of god, which the tempozall wilfulnesse cõmaundeth. Glos. Is thus, that if a wight haue pzosperite, he is a good man, and worthy to haue that pzosperyte, & who so hath aduersyte, he is a wicked man, and god hathe forsake him, & he is worthy to haue þ aduersite. This is the opynyon of some folke, and therof cometh that gessyng fyll of al thynge forsaked wzetched. Certes it greueth me to thinke ryght nowe in dyuers sentences that the people sayth of me. And thus moche I say, that the last charge & contrarye ous fortune is this, that whan any blame is layde vpon a caytyfe, men wenen þ he hath deserued that he suffreth. And I that am put away from good men, and dispoyled of dignytes, and defouled of my name by gessyng haue suffred turmentes for my good dedes. Certes me semeth þ I se the felonest couynes of wicked men haboũden in ioy and in gladnesse, and I se that euery losel shapeth him to fynde new fraudes for to accuse good folke, & I se that good folke be ouerthzowen for dzede of my peryll, and euezye luxurious turmentour dare done al felony vnpunyshed, and be exited therto by yftes, & innocentes be nat only dispoyled of sybernes, but of dede, & therto me list to crieu to god i this maner.

O stelliferi conditor orbis, Qui perpetuo nixus solio, Rapido cœli turbine versas, Et gemq; pati sidera cogis, Vt nũc pleno lucida cornu Totis fratris obuia flammis Condat stellas luna minores: Nunc obscuro pallida cornu Phebo propior lumina perdat. &c.

Thou maker of the whele þ beareth the sterres, whiche þ arte fastned to thy perdurable chayze, and turnest the heauen wyth a rauesshynge swerghe, and constraynest the sterres to suffre thy lawe: so that the Moone some tyme shynynge wyth her full hornes, meringe with all the beames of the sonne her brother, dryueth the sterres that ben lesse. And some tyme whan the moone pale, with her derke hornes appro-

approcheth the sonne, leseth her lyghtes: and that the euyn sterre Hesperus, whyche that in the fyrste tyme of the nyght bringeth fyrst her olde astrig, cometh eke ayen her vsed courste, and is pale by the morowe at vprysynge of the sonne, and is than ycleped Lucifer. Thou restraynest the daye by shorter dwellynge in the tyme of the colde wynter, that maketh þ leaues fall. Thou deuydest the swyfte tydes of the nyght, whan the hote sömer is comen. Thy might attempryth þ barpaunt seasons of the yere, so that zepherus the debonaire wynde bringeth ayen in the first sommer season, the hurs that the wynd that hight Boreas, hath rafte away in Autumpne, that is to saye, the laste ende of sömer, and the sedes that þ sterre that hight Arcturus sewe, or worse hygh corses, whan the sterre Cirius enchaufeth hem. There is nothyng vnbounden from this olde lawe, ne forleteth þ werke of his propre estate.

O thou gouernour, gouerning al thinges by certayne ende, why refuseste thou onely to gouerne þ werkes of men by dewe maner? Why suffrest thou, that slydyng fortune turneth so great enterchaünges of thynges, so that anoyous payne that shulde vnlye punisshe felons, punisheth innocentes: And folke of wycked maners sytten in hygh chayres, and annoyeng folke treden (and that vnrightfullye) on the nekkes of holy men. And vertue lere and stronge naturally, is hydde in derke derknesses, and the rightful man beareth þ payne and the blame of the felons. Ne the forsweryng, ne the fraude couerde and kempt with a faire colowre, ne annoyeth not to shrewdenesse, the whyche shrewdnesse, whan hem lyst vsen her strength, they reioysen hem to put vnder hem the souerayne kynges, which that the people worthoute nombre dreden. O thou what so euer thou be that knyttest all bondes of thinges, loke on these wrecches, erthes, wemen that ben not a foule parte, but a fayre parte of so great a werke: we ben tourmented in this see of fortune. Thou gouernour, withdrawe and restreyne the rauisshyng flodes, and fasten and ferme these erthes stable, with thilke bonde, with whiche ꝑ gouerneste heuen that is so large.

Her vbi continuato dolore delatrauit: illa huitu placido, nihilq; meis questibus mota. Phi. Cum te (inquit) mestū, lacrimantemq; vidisse: illico miserū exulemq; cognoui. Sed quā id longinquum esset exilium.

When I had with a contynuall sorowe sobbed or broken oute these thynges, she ꝙ her there pesible, and nothyng amoued with my cöplaintes, said thus. Whan I saye the (quod she) sorowfull and weppynge, I wyste anon that thou were a wrecche and exiled: But I wyst neuer howe ferre thyne exile was, yf thy tale ne had yshewed it me. But certes all be thou ferre fro thy countrey, thou nart not put oute of it, but thou hast fayled of thy waye & gone a mysse. And if thou halte leuer sorow to wene that thou be put out of thy countre, than hast thou put out thy selfe, rather than any other wyght hath, for no wight (but thou thy self) he might neuer haue done that to the: For yf thou remembre the of what countre thou art borne, it nys nat gouerned by Emperours ne by gouernement of multitude, as weren the countreys of hem of Athenis, but one lorde and one kyng, and that is god, that is lord of thy countrey, whiche that reioyseth him of þ dwellyng of his cytezyns, and not for to put hem in exyle. Of the whiche lorde it is a freedome to be gouerned by þ bryde of hym and obey to his iustyce. Hast thou forgoten thilke olde lawe of thy cyte, in the whiche cyte it is ordayned and establysshed, that what wyght hath leuer folde therin his sterte or his house than elswhere, he maye nat be exyled by no right from that place. For who so that is conteyned within the paleys of thylke cyte, there is no drede that he maye deserue to be exiled. But who that letteth þ wyll nenhabite there, he forfeteth also to deserue to be a citezein of thilke cite. So that I say, that the face of this place ne moueth me not so mykell, as thyne owne face. Ne I ne aske not rather the walles of thy lybrarye, apparayled and wrought with yuory and with glasse, than after þ seete of thy thought, in whiche I put nat whylom bookes, but I put that, that maketh bookes worthy of pryse or preysed: þ is to say sentence of my bokes. And certainly of thy deseses bestowed in comen good, þ hast sayd soth: but after þ multitude of thy good dedes thou hast sayd fewe. And of the houerstye or of the falsenesse of thynges þ bene opposed agaynst the, ꝙ haste remembred thynges þ de know wen to all folke. And of the felonyes and fraudes of thin accusours, it semeth þ to haue touched it forsoth rightfully & shortly: all myghten

ten tho ſame thynges better and more pleyn ouſly ben couche in the mouthe of the people that knoweth all thys. Thou haſte eke blamed greatly and cõplayned of the wrongfull dede of the Senate. And thou haſte ſorowed for my blame, & thou haſt wopen for the dommage of thy renoun ꝑ is apeyred: & thy laſt ſorowe enchaſed ayen fortune, complayneſt the guerdons ne be not euenly yolden to the deſertes of folke. And in thy latter ende of thy woode muſe, thou prayeſt that thylke peace that gouerneth the heuen ſhulde gouerne the erthe. But for that manye trybulacions of affections haue aſſayed the, and ſorowe & yre and wepyng to drawen the dyuerſly, as thou art nowe feeble of thought, myghtyer remedyes ne ſhullen not yet touchen the, for which we wyllen ſomdele dren lyghter medicynes, ſo that thylke paſſyons that be waxen harde in ſwellyng by perturbacions flowynge in to thy thoughte, mowen waxe eaſy and ſofte to receiue the ſtrength of a more mighty & more egre medycyne by an eaſier touchyng.

Cum phebi radiis graue Cancri ſidus ineſtuat, Tum qui largo negantibus, Sulcis ſemina credidit, Eluſus Cereris fide, Quarnas pergat ad arbores. Nũquam purpureũ nemus Lecture violas petas. &c.

When that ꝑ heuy ſterre of ꝑ Cancre enchaſeth by ꝑ beames of ꝓbebus: that is to ſaine. Whã that ꝓbebus the ſun is in ꝑ ſigne of the Cancre, whoſo yeueth than largely his ſedes to ꝑ feldes ꝑ refuſen to receiue hem, let him gone begyled of truſt ꝑ he had to his corne, to aketornes of okes. Yf ꝑ wyte gather violettes, ne go thou nat to the purple wodde, whan the feide chirkynge agryſeth of colde, by the felneſſe of the wynde that hyght Aquilone. Yf thou deſyreſt or wilt blẽ grapes, ne ſeke thou nat a glouton̄s honde to ſtrayne and preſſe the ſtalkes of the hyne in the firſte ſõmer ſeaſon. For Bacchus the god of wyne, hathe rather yeuen his yeftes to Autumpne ꝑ latter ende of ſommer. Godtokeneth and aſſygneth the tymes abiynge hem to her propre offyces, ne he ſuffereth not the ſtoũdes, which that him ſelfe hath benyded and cõſtrayned to ben ynedied togyder: and for thy he ꝑ forleeteth certayne ordynaunce of doyng by ouerthrowing way, he ne hath no glad iſſus or end of his werkes.

Primum igitur, pateris ne me paucis ratiocinationibus ſtatum tue mẽtis attingere, & tentare, vt quis modus ſit tue curationis intelligam. &c.

Firſt woldeſt thou ſuffre me to touche and aſſaye the eſtate of thought by a fewe demaundes, ſo ꝑ I may vnderſtand by, the maner of thy curacion? Aſke me (qõ I) at thy wyll, ꝑ thou wolt, & I ſhall anſwere. Tho ſayde ſhe thus. Whether weneſt ꝑ (qõ ſhe) ꝑ thys worlde be gouerned folyſhly by happes and fortunes, or elis weneſt thou that there be in it any gouernement of reaſon? B. Certes (qõ I) I trowe nat in no maner that ſo certayne thynges ſhulde be moued by fortunous fortune, but I wote wel that god, maker and maiſter is gouernour of his werke, ne was neuer yet day that might put me out of the ſothneſſe of that ſentẽce. Ꝓ. So is it (qõ ſhe) for the ſame thyng ſange thou a litel here before, and bewayleſt and wepeſt, that onely men were put out of ꝑ cure of god, for of all other thinges thou ne doubteſt nat, that they were gouerned by reaſon. But oughe, I wonder greatly why that thou art ſicke, ſens that thou arte put in ſo holſome a ſentence: But let vs ſeken deper. I conjecte that there lacketh I not what. But ſay me this. Sens that thou ne doubteſt not ꝑ this worlde be gouerned by god, with which gouernayle takeſt thou hede that it is gouerned? Vnneth (qõ I) knowe I the ſentence of thy queſtyon, ſo that I ne may not yet anſwẽren to thy demaundes. I was not diſeyued (qõ ſhe) ꝑ there ne fayled ſomwhat, by whiche the malady of perturbacion is creepe in to thy thought, ſo as the ſtrength of thy paſſyons ſhynynge is open: but ſaye me this. Remẽbreſt thou what is thende of thinges? and whyder the intencion of all kynde tendeth. I haue herde tolde it ſome tyme (qõ I) but diſeyneſſe hath dulled my memory. Certes (qõ ſhe) thou woteſt wel whence all thynges be comen & procedẽ. I wote wel (qõ I) and anſwerde, that god is begynnynge of all. And how may this be (qõ ſhe) that ſens thou knoweſt the begynning of thinges, that thou ne knoweſt nat what is the ende of thynges, but ſuche ben the cuſtomes of perturbacion, and this power they han, that they may moue a man from his place, that is to ſay, from the ſtableneſſe

sobreneſſe and perfectyon of his knowynge, but certes they may nat al arace hym, ne alien hym in all: but I wolde that thou woldeſt anſwere to this. Remēbreſt thou that thou arte a man? B. Why ſhulde I not remembre that (qō I) phi. Wayſt thou not tell me than (qō ſhe) what thynge is a man? Aſkeſt thou not me (qō I) whether that I be a reſonable moꝛtall beſt, I wote well and confeſſe that I am it. Wyſte thou neuer yet that thou were anyther thyng (qō ſhe). No (qō I). Nowe well nowe I (qō ſhe) other cauſe of thy maladye, and that righte great: Thou haſte lefte foꝛ to knowen thy ſelfe what thou art, thꝛough whi che I haue playnly founden the cauſe of thy maladie, oꝛ ris the entre of recouetyng of thy heale. Foꝛ why? Foꝛ thou art confoūded with forgetynge of thy ſelfe: Foꝛ thou foꝛowdeſt that thou art exiled of thy propꝛe goodes. And ſin thou ne wyſte what is thende of thynges, ſin thy demeſt thou that felonous and wikked men, be myghty and welful: and foꝛ thou haſt forgeten by whiche gouernementes þ woꝛlde is gouerned, foꝛ thy weneſt thou þ theſe mutacions of foꝛtune fleten without gouernour. Theſe ben the cauſes not only to malady, but eures gret cauſes to deth: But I thanke the ſeruour and the maker of heale, that nature hath not al foꝛleten the. I haue great nouriſſyng of thyn heale, and that is the ſothe ſentence of gouernaunce of the woꝛld, that thou byleueſt that the gouernynge of it is not ſubiect ne bnderput to the folye of theſe happes auenturous, but to the reaſon of god, & therfoꝛe doute the nothing, foꝛ of this lyttel ſparke ſhyne heate of lyfe ſhall ſhyne. But foꝛ as much as it is not time yet of faſter remedies, and þ nature is of thoughtes thus diſceiued, that as ofte as they caſte awaye ſothe opynions, they clothen hem in falſe opinions. Of the which falſe opinions þ derkeneſſe of perturbacyon wexeth bp, that confoundethe the beꝛ in ſight. And that derkeneſſe ſhal I ſomwhat aſſaye to maken thynne and weake, by lyght and meanelyche remedies, ſo that after that the derkeneſſe of diſceyuyng thynges be done awaye, thou maye knowe the ſhynynge of beꝛy lyght.

Nubibus atris condita nullum fundere poſſunt ſydera lumē. Si mare voluens turbidus auſter miſceat eſtum: Virrea dudum, Parq; ſerenis .ꝛc.

The ſterres couered with blacke clowdes ne mowe yetē adoun no lyght, yf the trouble wynde þ hyght Auſter, tumynge and walowyng the ſee medleth the here, that is to ſayne the boyſynge bp from the botom. The mawes þ were whylom clere as glaſſe, & lyke tō the fayre bꝛyght dayes, wythſtande aꝛon the ſyghtes of men, by the fylthe and oꝛdure that is reſolued. And the fletyng ſtreme that reyſeth downe dyuerſly from hygh moūtaynes is arreſted and reſyſted ofte tyme by thencountrynge of a ſtone, that is departed & fallen from ſome roche. And foꝛ thy, yf thou wylte loken and deme ſothe with clere lyght, and holden the way with a right path, weiue thou ioy, dꝛyue fro dꝛede, fleme thou hope, ne let no ſoꝛow appꝛoche, þ is to ſayne: Let non of theſe four paſſyons ouertome oꝛ blēde the. Foꝛ cloudy & derke is thilke thought & boūde with bꝛideis, where as theſe thynges reignē.

Explicit liber pꝛimus.

Poſt hec pauliſper obticuit, atq; vbi attentionem meam modeſta taciturnitate collegit, ſic exoꝛſa eſt. Si penitus egritudinis tue cauſas, habitumq; .ꝛc.

After this ſhe ſtynt a litel, and after that ſhe had gadered by a temper ſtylneſſe myne attencion, as who ſo might ſayn thus. After theſe thynges ſhe ſtynte a lytell, and whan ſhe apperceyued by a temper ſtylneſſe, þ I was entēpꝛyſ to heꝛen heꝛ, ſhe begā to ſpeke in this wiſe. Yf I (qō ſhe) haue vnderſtonden & knowen vtterly, the cauſes & the habite of thy malady, þ languyſheſt & art defected foꝛ deſyre and talent of thy fatheꝛ foꝛtune. Thy þ ylke Foꝛtune oneꝛyr þ is chaunged as thou fayneſt tō thewarde, hath peruerted the clereneſſe and the eſtate of thy coꝛage. I vnderſtōdyng þ fele oꝛ manyfolde colouꝛs and diſceytes of thylke meruayllous monſtre foꝛtune, and howe ſhe vſeth full flateryng familiaryte with hem that ſhe enfoꝛceth to begyle, ſo longe, tyll that ſhe confounde with vnſuffrable ſoꝛowe, hem that ſhe hathe lefte in diſpayre vnpꝛueyed. And yf thou remembꝛeſt well the kynde, the maners, and the de-

serve of slyke fortune, thou shalt wel knowe that as in her thou neuer ne haddest, ne haste ylost anye sayre thynge: But (as I trowe) I shal not greatly trauayen to done the remembren on these thynges. For thou were wonte to hurteien and despysen her with many wordes, whan she was blaundishyng and presente, and pursuedest her with sentences that weren drawen oute of myne entre, that is to saye, of myn enformacion: but no sodayne mutacyon ne betydeth not without a maner chaungyng of corages. And so it is befal, that thou arte a lytel departed fro the peace of thy thoughte, but now is tyme that thou drynke and taaste some soft and delytable thynges, so that whā they be entred within the, it mowē make way to stronger drinkes of medycins. Come nowe forth therfore the suasyon of swetnesse retherayen, whiche that goeth onely the ryght way, whyle she forsaketh nat myne estatutes. And with Rethorike come forthe musyke a damoysell of ourc house, that syngeth nowe lyghter rnodes or prolacions and nowe heuyer.

What eyleth the man? What is it þ hath caste the in to mournyng & in to wepyng? I trowe that thou haste seyne some newe thyng and vnsouyte? Thou weneſt that fortune be chaunged ayen me, but thou weneſt wronge if that thou wene alway tho bene her maners. She hath rather kepte as to the warde, her propre stablenesse in the chaūgyng of her seife: right suche was she whan she flattered the and disceyued the, wyth vnlefull lykynges and false wylfulnesse. Thou haste nowe knowen and atteinte þ doubtous or double visage of thilke blynde goddesse Fortune. She that yet couereth and wympleth her to other folke, hath shewed her seife euerydele to the: Yf thou approueſt her and thynkeſt that she is good, vse her maners and playne the nat, and yf thou agreeſt her false trecherye, dispyse and caste away her that playeth so harmefully, for the that is nowe cause of so much sorowe to the, shulde be to the cause of peace & of ioye. She hath forsaken the forsothe, the which that neuer man maye be syker that she ne shall forsaken him. Glose. But natheleſſe some bokes haue the texte thus. Forsothe she hathe forsaken the, ne there nys no man syker that she ne hath not forsaken. Holdeſt thou than thylke welefulnesse precious to the that shall passen, and is present fortune dere worth to þ, whiche thaterys not fayethfull for to dwell, and whan she gothe awaye that she bringeth a wight in sorowe. For sens she maye not be with holden at a mannes wyll, she maketh hym a wrecche whan she departeth fro hym. What ayre thynge is fortune, but a maner shewyng of wrecchydnesse that is to come. Ne sufficeth not onely to loken on thynge that is present before the eyen of a mā, but wysdom loketh and mesureth thende of thynges, and the same chaūgyng from on to another, that is to sayne, from aduersyte in to prosperyte, maketh that þ manaces of fortune ne ben not for to dreden, ne the flatterynge to be desyred. Thus at laste it behoueth the to sustenen with euen wyl in pacyence, all that is done wythin the flooze of fortune, that is to saye in thy wonde, sithe thou haſt ones put thy necke vnder the yoke of her. For if thou wolt wryten a lawe of wedyng and of dwelling to fortune, whiche that thou haſt chosen freely to ben thy lady: Arre thou nat wrongfull in that, & makeſt Fortune wroth and aspre by thyne impacience, and yet thou mayſt nat chaungen her?

Yf thou committeſt and betakeſt thy sayles to the wynde, thou shalt be shouen, nat thyder that thou woldeſt, but whyder that the wynde shoueth the. Yf thou casteſt thy seedes in the frides, thou shuldeſt haue in mynde that thy yeres bene amonges otherwhyle pleyntuous, and otherwhyle bareyn. Thou haſt betaken thy seife to þ gouernaunce of fortune, and sith thy it behoueth the to ben obeysaunt to þ maners of thy lady. Enforceſt thou the to resten or wyth holden the swyftnesse and the sweygh of her tournyng whele? O thou foole of al mortal fooles, if Fortune began to dwell stable, she ceſſed than to ben Fortune.

Per cum superba verterit vices dextra, Et estuantis more fertur Euripi. Dudū tremendos sua protexit reges, Humilēq; victi sublevat fallax vultū. Nonilla dura miseros audit, haud curat fletus. &c.

When Fortune wt a proud right hand thourned her chaūgyng floūdes, she fareth like the maners of the boilynge Euripe.

Glosa. Euripe is an arme of þ see, that ebbeth & floweth and some tyme the streme is on o syde and somtyme on that other.

Texte. The crewel fortune casteth adoun kynges

thynges, that whylom weren ydrad, and the herrysable enhaunceth hy the humble chert of hym that is discomfited: ne she neyther heareth ne recketh of wretched weppynges. And she is so hard, that she laugheth and scorneth the weppyng of hem, the whiche she hath maked to wepe with her fre wyl. Thus she playeth and thus she proueth her strengthes, and hewety a great wonder to al her seruantes, if that a wight is seen welefull, and ouerthrowe in an houre.

Uellem autem pauca tecum, Fortune ipsius verbis agitare. Tu igitur an ius postulet animaduerte. P. Quid tu o homo tram me agis cotidianis querelis. &c.

CErtes I wold pleden with the a few thynges, hsynge the wordes of fortune: take hede nowe thy selfe, yf that she aske ryght. O thou man, wherfore makest thou me gylty by thyn euery dayes playninges?

What wronge haue I done the? what goodes haue I bereft hy that were thyn? Stryue in pleet with me before what suge that thou wylt, of the possessyon, of rychesses, or of dignites, and if thou maist shewen me, that euer any mortall manne hath receyued any of tho thinges to ben his in propre, thā I I graūt freely, that thylke thinges were thyn, whiche that thou askest. Whan that nature brought the forth out of thy mothers wombe, I receyued the naked and nedy of al thynges, and I nourysshed the with al my rychesses, and was redy and enteneyfe through my fauour to susteyn the: and that maketh the nowe impacient ayenst me. And I enuyronned the wyth al habondaunce and shynynge of all goodes, that ben in my ryght: nowe it lyketh me to withdrawe myn honde. Thou hast had grace as he that hath vsed forayne goodes. Thou hast no ryght to playne the, as though thou haddest veterly forlorne al thy thynges. Why playnest thou thanne? I haue done to the no wronge. Rychesses, honours, and such other thiges ben of my ryght. My seruauntes knowen me for her lady: they come with me, & departen whan I wende. I dare wel affirme hardely, that if tho thynges, of whiche thou playnest that thou hast forlorn had ben thyn, thou ne haddest nat forlorne hē. Shal I than be defended only to vse my ryght? Certes it is leful to the heuen to make clere dayes, and after hy to ourrome the same dayes with derke nyghtes. The yere hath eke leaue to apparayle the vilage of the erthe, nowe with flowres, and nowe with fruite, and to confounde hem sometyme with raynes and with colde.

The see hath eke his ryght to ben sometyme caulme & blandishynge, with smothe water, and sometyme to be hotryble with wawes & with tempestes. But couetyse of men, hy may not be stanched, shal it hynde me to be stedfaste, sythen that stedfastnesse is vncouthe to my maners. Suche is my strength, and suche play I play comenly. I turne the whirlynge whele with the turnyng cerkle. I am glad to chaūgen the lowest to hy hyest, & the hyest to hy lowest. Worthe vp if thou wolte, so it be by this lawe, that thou ne hold nat that I do the wrong, though thou discende adowne, whan the reason of my play asketh it. Wyste thou not howe Cresus kyng of Lidiens, of whiche kyng Cyrus was full sore agaste, a lytel before hy this Cresus was caughte of Cirus, and ledde to the fyre to be brende, but that a rayne discended from heuen hy rescowed him? And it is out of mynde howe that Paulus coūsul of Rome, whan he had taken the king of Perciens, weped petously for the captiuite of the selfe kynge. What other thing bewayleth the crynenges of tragedies, but onely the dedes of fortune, hy with an aukwarde stroke ouerturneth the realmes of great nobleye.

Glose. Tragedie is to sayne a diter of a prosperite for a tyme, hy endeth in wretche dnesse. Lernedest not thou in Grece whan thou were yonge, that in the entre or in the celler of Jupiter there ben couched two tonnes, that one is ful of good, that other is ful of harme? What right hast thou to playne, if thou haste taken more plentously of the good syde, that is to sayne of rychesse & prosperite? And what eke if I be not al departed fro hy? What eke if my mutabylite reueth the ryghtfull cause of hope to haue yet better thiges? Natheles dis maye the not in thy thought. And thou that arte put in the comune realme of al, ne desyre not to lyuen by thyn owne proper ryght.

Si quātas rapidis flatibus incitus Pontus
uersat arenas, Aut quot stelliferis edita noctibus Celo sidera fulgent: Tāras fundat opes, nec retrahat manum Pleno copia cornu: Humanum miseras haud ēdo genus

ceffet ferre querelas &c.

Thoughe plenty goddesse of riches, thylde adowne with a full horne, and withdrawe not her hande, as manye ryches as the see turneth vpwarde sandes, whan it is moued with rayshynge blastes, or els as manye ryches as there shinen bright sterres in the heuen on the sterry nyghtes: yet for all that mankynde nold not cesse to wepe wretched plaintes. And al be it so that god receyued her prayeres, and yeueth hem as foole large muche golde, & apparayleth couetous folke with noble or clere honours: yet semeth him haue gotte nothyng. But alway cruel rauyne deuourynge al that they haue gotten, sheweth other gappynges, þ is to saye, gapen and desyren yet after moryches. What bridels might with holden to any certayne ende the disordinate couetyse of men, whā euer the rather þ it fleteth in large yeftes, the more bṙneth in hem the lust of hauing? Certes he þ quakyng & dredful weneth hym selfe nedy, he ne lyueth neuermore riche.

His igitur, si pro se fremum, verbis fortuna loquerētur, quid profecto cōtrahiscerēs, non haberes. Ut si quid est, quo querelam tuam iure tuearis, proferas oportet.

Therfore if that fortune spake with ther for her selfe in thys maner, forsothe thou ne haddest not what thou myghtest answere. And yf thou hast any thynge, wherwith thou mayst ryghtfully defenden thy complaynte, it behoueth the to shewē, & I wol yeuen to the space to tellen it. Boece. Certaynly (quod I) than, these bē fayre vtāges, & anoynted with hony swetnesse of rethorike & musyke, and onely whyle they ben herde and sown in eeres, they ben delityous. But to wretches it is a deper fryyng of harme, this is to sayn, þ wretches feien þ harmes þ they suffre more grenously, than the remedies or the delites of these wordes may gladden or confortē hem. So that whan these thinges flyten for to sown in eares, þ sorow that is inset greueth þ thought. Right so it dothe (qđ she). For these ne ben yet no remedies of the malady, but they bē a maner norisshynge of thy sorowes, that rebellen ayēst thy curacion. For whan tyme is, I shall moue & aiust suche thynges, that perceiuen ful depe. But natheless that thou shalte not wryne to leten thy selfe a wreteche. Hastē thou forgeten the numbre and þ maner of thy welefulnesse. I speake not howr that the fourtayne men of the cyte toke the in cure and kepynge, whan thou were orpheryn of father and of mother, and were chosen in affynite of prynces of the cite. And thou begannest rather to be lefe & dere, than for to be a neyghbour, the whiche thyng is the moste precious kynde of any propynquite or alliaunce þ maye ben. Who is it that ne sayde tho that thou were ryght welefull, with so great nobley as thy fathers in lawe, and with the chastite of thy wyfe, and with thopportunite and nobilite of thy masculyne children, that is to sayn, thy sonnes. And ouer al thys (me lyste to passen of comune thinges) how thou haddest in thy youth dignities, þ were wanned to olde men, but it delyteth me now to comen to the singuler vpbreydynge of thy welefulnesse. If ony fruit of mortal thinges may haue any wight or price of welefulnesse, myghtest thou euer forgetten for any charge of harme that myght befal, the remembraunce of thylke daye, that thou saw thy two sonnes made consulatours, and laddē togyther from thy house, vnder so great assemble of senatours, and vnder the blythnesse of the people, and whan thou sawe hem sette in the court in hye chayres of dignities. Thou trethorien or pronouncer of kinges prayslinges deseruedest glory of witte and of eloquence, whan thou sittinge betwene thy two sonnes counsaylours, in the place that hight Circo, and fulfilledest the byddyng of the moultytude of people that was spradde about the wyth so large prayslyng and laude, as men synge in victories. Tho yaue thou to fortune as I trowe, that is to say, tho profitedest thou fortune with glorious wordes, & decoruedest her, whan she acoyed & norished the as her owne delices. Thou bare away of fortune a yefte, that is to saye suche guerdon that she neuer yaue to priuate mā. Wilt thou therfore laye a reknynge with fortune? She hath now er first twynckled vpon þ with a wicked eye. If thou consider the nombre and the maner of thy dilites and of thy sorowes, thou mayst not forsaken that nart yet blyssful. For if therfore thou weneste thy selfe not welefull for tho thinges that semeden ioyful ben passed ther nis not why thou shuldest seme thy selfe

a wretche

a wretche, for thynges þ semen now for, pas sen also. Art thou nowe comen a stra-yne gest in to the shadow or tabernacle of this life? or troweste thou that any stedfastnesse be in mānes thinges? Whan oft a swifte houre dissolueth the same man, that is to saye, whan the soule departed from the body. For a thoughe that selde is there any faythe that fortunous thynges wold dwellen, yet natheles the last daye of a mannes lyfe is a maner lyth to fortune, and also to thilke that hath dweite. And therfore what wenest thou dare reche if thou fouer her in dyeng, or els that the fortune forsake the in fleyng awaye.

Cum polo phebus roseis oriadzigis Lucē spergere cepit, Pallet aduentes hebetata baltus flammis stella prementibus. &c.

When Phebus the sonne begynneth to spreade hys clerenesse with rosen chariottes, thanne the sterre dymmed palethe her whyte cheres by the flambes of the sōne that ouercōmeth the sterre light, that is to sayne whan þ sonne is ryſen, the daye sterre wexeth pale & leseth her lyght. For the greatlightnesse of the sun, whē þ wode wexeth rodi of rosē floures i the fiest sommer season, thzoughe the brethe of the wynde zepherus that wexeth warme, the cloudye wynde Auster blowe fellyche, than gothe away fayrenesse of thynes. Oft the se is clere and caulme with mouing floodes, & ofte the horrible wynde Aquilon moueth boiling tempestes and ouerwhelueth the see. If the forme of this worlde is so feldstable, & if it turneth by so many enterchaunges: wylt thou than trusten in the tombling fortunes of men? Wylt thou trowen on flytyng goodes? It is certayn and established by lawe perdurable, that nothyng that is engendzed is stedfast ne stable.

Tum ego, vera inquā, cōmemoras o virtutū dim nutrix: nec inficiari possū prosperitatis mee velissimū cursum. Sed hoc est, quid. &c.

Than said I thus: O norryce of al vertues, thou sayst ful soth ne I maye not forsake the rizt swifte course of my prosperyte, that is to sayne, that the prosperyte ne be comen to me wonder swyftelye and soone. But thys is a thynge that greatly smarteth me, whan it remembzeth me. For in al aduersyties of fortune the moste vnsely kynde of contrarrous fortune is to haue ben weleful. P. But that thou abyest thus (qō she) the turment of thy false opinion, that mayst thou not ryghtfully blamen ne aretten to thynges, as who sayth, that thou haste yet manye habondaunces of thynges. Textus. For al be it so that the ydle name of auēturous welefulnesse moueth the nowe, it is lefull that thou reken with me, of how many thynges thou hast yet plentie. And therfore if that thilke thing that thou haddest for more precious in al thy rychesse of fortune be kept to the yet by þ grace of god vnwēmed & vndefouled: mayst thou than playne ryghtfully vpon the mischef of fortune, sythen thou hast yet thy best thynges? Certes yet lyueth in good poynt thylke precious honour of mākynde Symachus thy wyues father, whiche that is a man made of all sapyence & vertue, the which mā thou wouldest bie with þ price of thyn owne lyfe, he bewayleth the wzonges that men doone to the, and not for hym selfe. For he lyueth in syckernesse of any sentēce put ayenst hym. And yet lyueth thy wyfe, that is attempre of witte, and passyng other women in clennesse of chastite. And for I wolde close shortly her bountes, she is lyke her father: I tel the, that she lyueth lothe of this life, and kepeth to the onely her gooste, and is al mate and ouercome by weping & sorowe for desire of the. In the which thing only I more graūten the, that thy wylfulnesse is amenused. What shal I sayn eke of thy two sones conn saylours, of whiche as of childzen of her age there shyneth the lykenesse of the witte of her father & of her elde father? And sythen the soueravn cure of al mortal folke is to sauen her owne lyues, if thou knowe thy selfe, thy goodes make the more weleful. For yet ben there thynges dwelled to the warde, þ no man douteth þ they ne ben more derewozthe to þ thā thyn owne lyfe. And for thy dzie teeres, for yet is not euery fortune hateful to the ward: ne ouer great tempest ne hathe not yet fallen vpon the, whan thyn ancres cleuen faste: that neither wol suffren þ comforte of thys tyme presēt, ne the hope of tyme coming to passen ne to faylen. B. And I pray (qō I) that faste mote they holden: for thewhiles that they holden, how so euer that thynges ben, I shal wel sleten forthe and escapen. But thou mayste

wel

wel seme howe great apparayles & aray, that me lacked that he passed awaye from me. ℘. I haue somewhat auaunced & furthered the (qꝺ she) if that thou enoy not or forthinke not of al thy fortune, as who sayth, I haue somwhat comforted the, so that thou tempest not the thus with al thy fortune, sythen thou hast yet thy best thynges. But I maye not suffren thy delyces, that playnest so wepinge and anguishous, for that there lacketh somwhat to thy welefulnesse. For what man is he that is so sad or of great patyte welfulnesse, that he ne stryueth & playneth on some halfe ayen the qualite of his estate? for why ful anguishous thing is the condicion of mannes goodes. For either it cometh nat al togyther to a wight, or els it ne lasteth not perpetuell. For some man hath great rychesse, but he is ashamed of his vngenteyl lynage. And some man is renomed of nobilesse of kynred, but he is enclosed in so great angysshe of nede of thynges, that hym were leuer that he were vnknow. And some man haboundeth bothe in richesse & nobilesse, but yet he bewayleth his chaste lyfe, for he ne hath no wyfe. And some man is, & selily maryed, but he hath no children, and nourisshyth his richesses to straūge folke. And some man is gladed with childre, but he wepeth ful sore for ꝑ trespace of his sone or of his doughter. And for this ther ne acordeth no wight lightly to ꝑ condicion of hys fortune. For alway to euery man there is in somwhat ꝑ vnassayed, he ne wot nought, or els he dredeth ꝑ he hath assayed. And adde this also, ꝑ euery welefyl man hath a ful delycate felyng: so that but if al thinges befallen at his owne wyl, he is impacient, or is not vsed to haue non aduersite, anone he is throwen adowne for euery lytel thynge. And ful lytel thynges ben tho, that withdrawen the somme or the perfection of blysfulnesse fro hem that ben moste fortunate. Howe many men trowest thou wolde demen hem selfe to ben almoste in heuen, yf they myghten atteyne to the lest parte of the remnaunt of thy fortune? Thys same place that thou cleapest exile, is countrey to hem that enhabyten here. And for thy nothynge wrecched, but whan thou wenest it, as who sayth: Thou thy selfe ne no wyght elles nys a wrecch, but when he weneth hym selfe he is a wrecch by reputacion of hys corage. And ayenwarde: All fortune is blysfull to a man, by the agreablite, or by the egalite of hym that suffreth it. What man is that, that is so welefull, that nolde chaungen hys estate whan he hath loste hys pacience? The sweetnesse of mānes welefulnesse is spraynt with many bytternesses. The whyche welefulnesse, although it seme swete and ioyfull to hym that vseth it, yet maye it not ben withholden, that it ne gothe awaye whan it wol.

Then it is well seme, howe wrecched is the blysfulnesse of mortall thynges, that neyther it dureth perpetuel wyth hem, that euery fortune receyuen agreablye or egally, ne it delyteth nat in all to hem that ben anguyshous.

O ye mortal folke, what seke ye than blysfulnesse out of your owne selfe: whiche is putte in youre selfe? Errour and folye confoundeth you. I shal shewe the shortly the poynte of soueraygne blysfulnesse.

Is there any thynge to the more precious thanne thy lyfe? Thou wylte answerre nay.

Thanne, if it so be that thou art maystre ouer thy selfe, that is to sayne, by tranquyllyte of thy soule, than haste thou thynges in thy power, that thou noldest neuer lesen: for fortune maye not bynemme it the. And that thou mayste knowe that blisfulnesse ne may not stande in thynges that ben fortunous and temporel, nowe vnderstande and gadre it togyther thus. If blysfulnesse be the souerayne good of nature that lyueth by reson, me thynketh thylke thynge is not souerayngne good that may be taken awaye in any wyse. For more worthy thyng is and more digne than thynge, that may not be taken awaye. Than sheweth it well, that the vnstablenesse of fortune maye nat attayne to receyue ber blysfulnesse. And yet more ouer what man that thys combynge welefulnesse leadeth, eyther he wote that it is chaungeable, or els he wot it not? And yf he wote it not, what blysfull fortune maye there ben in the blyndenesse of ignoraunce? And yf he wote, that it is chaungeable, he mote alwaye ben a dradde, that he ne lese that thynge, that he ne douteth not but that he may lesen it. As who sayth, he mote alwaye be agast, lyke he lese that, that he weneth right wel he maye lese. For whiche the contynuel drede that he hath, ne suffreth him not to be welefyl. Or els yf he lese it, he weneth to be dispyted and forleten. Certes the that is a ful lytel good, that is borne wythouten herre whanne it is loste, that is to sayne, that men do no more force of the losse thanne

of the

of the hauynge. And for as muche as thou thy selfe arte he, to whom it hath be shewed and preued by ful many demonstracions, as I wote wel, that the soules of men ne mowen not dyen in no wyse. And eke sens it is clere & certayne, that fortunous wrekfulnesse endeth by the deth of the body: it may not be doubted, that yf dethe may take awaye blisfulnesse, that all the kynde of mortall thynge ne discendeth in to wrecchednesse by the ende of dethe. And sythen we knowe wel, that many a man hathe sought the fruite of blisful nesse, not onely with suffring of deth, but eke with suffryng of paynes & turmētes: howe myght thā this present lyfe make mē blisful, sens that thilke selfe lyfe ended, it ne maketh folke no wrecches.

¶ Quisquis volet perennem
Cautus ponere sedem.
Stabilisq; nec sonori
Sterni flatibus Euri,
Et fluctibus minantem.
Curat spernere pontum,
Montis cacumen alti,
Bibulas vitet arenas. &c.

What maner of folke, ware and stable that woll founden hem a pardurable seete, and ne wyll not be cast down with the loude blastes of the winde Eurus, & wyll dispyce þ see menasyng with stoodes: Lette hym eschewe to bylden on the coppe of the mountaygne, or in the moyste sandes.
For if þ fel winde Auster turmēteth þ coppe of the mountaygnes with all her strengthes, and the lose sandes refusen to beare the heavy weightes. And for thy yf thou wolte flyen the perylous auenture, that is to saye, of the worlde: haue mynde certaynly to set thyn house of a mery seete in a lowe stone.
For al though the wynde troublyng the see, thonder with ouerthrowynge, thou that arte put in quiete and welefull, by strēgth of thy paleys, shalt leade a clere age, scornynge the woodnesse and the yres of thayre.

Sed quoniam rationum iam in te mearū fomenta discendunt, paulo validioribus uten dum puto. Age enim. Si iam caduca ac momentaria fortune. &c.

But for as muche as the norysshynges of my reason discenden nowe in to the, I trowe it were tyme to vsen a litel strenger medicens. Nowe vnderstād here, al wer it so that the yeftes of fortune ne were not brittell ne transytorye, what is there in hem that maye be thyne in any tyme? Or elis that it ne is foule, yf that it be loked & consydered perfytely. Rychesses, ben they precious by the nature of them selfe, or elles by the nature of the? What is moste worthe of rychesse? is it not golde or myght of money assembled? Certes that gold and that money shyneth & yeueth better renōme to them that dyspenden it, than to thylke folke that mocheren it: for auarice maketh alwaye muckerers to ben hated, and largesse maketh folke clere of renomme. For syth that suche thynges as ben transferred from one man to an other: me maye not dwell wyth no man: Certes then is that money precious, when it is translated in to other folke, and shynen to be hadde by vsage of largeyeuynge of hym that hath yeuen it. And also yf all the money that is ouer al-in al þ world, were gadred toward one man, it shoulde make all other men to be nedy as of that. And certes a boyce al hole, that is to sayne wythout amenusyng, fulfylleth together the heryng of moche folke. And whā they ben apassed, nedes they maken hem poore, that forgone tho rychesses.

O, strayt and nedy clepe I these rychesses, sens þ many folke ne maye not haue it all, ne al ne maye it not comen to one man without pouertie of al other folke. And the shinynge of gēmes, þ I call precious stones, draweth it not the eyen of folke to hemward, that is to sayn for the beaute. But certes, if ther were beaute or bountie in shynyng of stones, thylke clerenesse is of the stones hem selfe, & not of men. For whiche I wonder greatly, that men mac ueylen on suche thynges. For why, what thīge is it, that if it wanteth mouyng and ioyncture of soule and body, that by right myght semen a fayre creature to him that hath a soule of

le of reason. For al be it so, that gemes drawen to hem self a lyte of the lasse beaute of the worlde, thorow the cuent of her creatour and the distinction of hem self, yet for as mikel as they ben putte vnder your excellence, they ne haue nat deserued by no way, that ye shulde marueylen on hem. And the beaute of selues delyteth it not mykel vnto you.

B. Why shulde it not delyten vs, sythe that it is a right fayre porcyoun of the right fayre werke, that is to sayne, of thys worlde. And ryght so ben we gladed somtyme of the face of the see, whan it is clere: And also marueylen we on the heuen and on the sterres, and on the sone and on the moone. Wh. Apertayneth (qd he) any of thilke thiges to the. Why darest thou glorifie the in the shynynge of any suche thynges. Art thou distingued and embelyshed by the spryngyng floures of the fyrst somer season. Or swelleth thy plentie in fruites of somer. Why arte thou rauyshed with ydel ioyes. Why embracest thou straunge goodes, as they were thyne. Fortune ne shal neuer make, that suche thynges ben thyne, that nature of thynges hath maked foreyne fro the. Sothe it is, that withouten dout the fruites of the erthe owen to be to the nourysshynge of bestes. And yf thou wolte fulfyll thy nede after that it sufficeth to nature, than is it no nede that thou seke after þ superfluite of fortune. For with ful fewe thynges and with ful litel thinges nature hath her apayd. And if thou wolte achoken the sufficiynge of nature wt superfluities: Certes thylke thynges that thou wolte threwen or pouren in to nature, shulden ben vnioyfull to the or els anoyous. Weenest thou eke, that it be a fayre thynge to shyne with dyuers clothynges. Of whiche clothyng, if the beaute be agreable to loken vpon, I woll marueylen on the nature of the mater of thylke clothes, or els on the worke man that wrought hem. Dothe also a longe route of meyne make the a blyssfull man. the whiche seruauntes yf they ben vicious of condicions, it is a great charge and distruccion to the house and a great enemye to the lord hym self. And if they ben good men, howe shal straunge & foreyn goodnes be put in the nõbre of thy richesses. So þ by al these forsayd thynges it is clerely shewed, þ neuer one of thylke thinges þ thou acompte dest for thy goodes, nas not thy good. In which thinges, if there be no beaute to be desyred, why shuldest thou be sayle to lese the. Or why shuldest thou be seloyle to hold hem. For yf they ben fayre of their owne kynde, what apertayneth þ to the. For also wel shulden they haue ben fayre by them self, though they were departed from al thy richesses. For why, fayre ne precious wer they not for that they comen amõg thy richesses. But for they semed fayre and precious, therfore þ haddest leuer reken hem amonges thy richesses. But what richesse thou of fortune wyth so great afaire. I trowe thou seke to dryue awaye nede wyth habõdaũce of thinges, but certes it turneth you al into the cõtrary. For why, certes it mysbeth of full many helpynges to kepen the rychesse of precious hostilementes. And sothe it is, that of many thynges they haue nede, þ many thynges haue. And ayen warde, of lyte thing ne deth him that measureth his fil after the nede of kynde, & not after thoutrage of auctrise. It is so then, that ye men haue no propre good set in you, for such ye mote seke outward in foreyn & subiect thiges. So is than the condicion of thinges turned vp so downe, that a man that is a diuine beest, by merit of his reason, thinketh that him self nys neuer fayre ne noble, but yf it be thorough possession of hostilimẽtes, that ne han no soules, and ertes al other thynges ben apayde of her owne beaute. But ye men þ be semblable to god by your resonable thought, desiren to aparayllen your excellẽt kynde of the lowest thinges. Ne ye vnderstanden not howe great a wrongis don to your creatour. For he wold þ mankinde wer most worthy & noble of any erthly thing: and ye threwen down your dignites bynethen þ lowest thynges. For yf that al the good of euery thynge be more precious, than is thylke thyng, whose that the good is, sythe ye demen that the foulest thynges ben your goodesse: than submitten ye and putte your selues vndre the foulest thynges by your estimatiõ. And certes this betydeth not without your desserte. For certes suche is the condicion of al mankynde, that onely when it hath knowynge of it self, than passeth it in nobilesse al other thynges. And whan it forleteth the knowynge of it self, than it is brought benethen al beestes. For why, all other lyuynge beestis han of kinde to knowen not hem self. But whan that men leten þ knowyng of hem self, it cometh hem of vyce. But howe vyce shewerth the errour and the folye of you men

that

that women that any thyng maye ben apparelled with straunge appareilinges. but forsoth that may not be done. For if a wight shyneth with thynges that bene put to hym: As thus. Whilke thynges shynen with, whiche a man is appareiled: certes thylke thynges ben cõmended and praised, with whiche he is appareiled: but natheleſſe, thynge that is couered and wrapped vnder ꝑ, dwelleth in his frith. And I deny that thylke thynge be good, that moueth him that hath it. Sadde I of thys? Thou wolte saye nay. Certes rychesſes haue moued ful ofte hem, ꝑ han had tho rychesſe. Sithe that euery wycked shrew is for his wicknesſe the more gredy after other folkes richesſes, where so euer it be in any place, be it golde or precious stones, and weneth him onye moſt worthy that hath hem. Thou than that so besy diedeſt nowe the swerde and the speare, yf thou haddeſt entred in the partye of this ilke anoyde wayfaryng man, than wolden thou synge before ꝑ theſe, as who sayth a pore man that bearreth no rychesſe on him by the way, may boldly syng before theues, for he hath not wherof to be robbed. O precious and right clere is the blyſſulnes of mortal richesſes, that whan thou haſte gotten it, than haſt thou lorne thy sekernesſe.

Felix niminum prior etas, Contenta fidelibus aruis, Nec inerti perdita luxu: Facilique victa solebat Ieiunia soluere glande, Nec bacchia munera norat. Liquido confundere melle, Nec lucida vellera sucum &c.

BLyſful was the fyrſt age of men, they helden hem apayde with the metes ꝑ the trewe feldes brought forth, they ne dyſtroyed nor diſcryued nat hem ſelfe wythout rage, they weren wont hyghely to slaken her hunger at euyn with akehornes of okes, they ne coude nat medel the yefte of Baccus to the clere hony, that is to sayne, they coulde make ne piement or clarre: Ne they coude nat medel the bright fleeces of the coũtre of Seriẽs with the venym of Tiry, this is to sayn, they coude nat dyen white fleces of Syrien coũtre with the blode of a manere shelfyshe, that men fynden in Tyrie, with whiche blode men dyen purple. They slepten holsome slepes vpon the grasſe, and dronken of the rennynge waters, and lyen vnder the shadowes of the hie pyne trees. Ne no geste or straunger ne carke yet the hye see with oores or wythyppes, ne they ne hadden seyn yet no newe strondes to leden marchandiſe into diuerſe countreys. Tho weren the cruel clarions ful huſt and ful styl. Ne blod yshad by egre hate, ne had deyed yet armures. For where to or whiche woodneſſe of enemyes wolde fyrſt mouen armes, whan they sawen cruel woundes, ne none medes be of blode yshad? I wolde ꝑ our rymes shoulde rutne ayen to tholde maners. But ꝑ anguyshous loue of hauing in folke burneth more cruelity than ꝑ moũtain of Ethna, ꝑ ay brenneth. Alas, what was he that fyrſt daiſe vp ꝑ gobbettes or ꝑ weightes of golde, couered vnder erthe, & the precious stones ꝑ wolden haue be hydde? he daiſe vp precious perils, that is to sayn, that he ꝑ hem first vp daiſe, he daiſe vp a precious peryl, for why, for the preyousnes of such thyng hath many man ben in peryll.

Quid autem de dignitatibus, potentiaq; disseram, quas vos, vere dignitatis, ac potestatis inscii, celo exequatis? Quę si inimpro biſſimum quemq; ceciderint &c.

BVt what shal I saye of dignitees and powers, the which ye men that neyther knowen very dignite ne very power, areysen hem as hyghe as the heuen? the whiche dygnites and powers, yf they comen to any wicked man, they don as great damages and diſtructions, as doth the flambe of the mountayne Ethna, whan the flambe walowyth vp, ne no deluny ne doth so cruell harmes. Certes ye remembre well (as I trowe) ꝑ thylke dygnyte that mẽ cleape the imperye of counſaylours, the whiche why lom was begynnynge of freedom, your elders coueyted to haue doone awaye that dygnyte for the pryde of the counſaylours. And tighte for that same youre elders before that tyme had done awaye oute of the cyte of Rome the kynges name, that is to saine, they nold haue no lenger no kynge. But nowe, yf so be that dignitees and powers bene yeuen to good men, the whiche thing is ful stride, what agreable thynges is there in tho dignitees and powers, but onely the goodneſſe of folke that beren hem? And therfore is it thus, that honour

cometh not to vertue bycause of dignite: and ayenwarde, honoure commeth of dignite for cause of vertue. But whiche is thilke youre dere worth power that is so clere & so requyrable? O ye erthlye beestes, considere ye not ouer whych thing that it semeth that ye haue power? Nowe yf thou sawe a meuse among other myce, that chalenged to hym selfwarde right & power ouer al other myce, how great scorne wolde ye thou haue of it? Glosa. So fareth it by men, the body hath power ouer the body: for if thou loke wel vpon the body of a wight, what thing shalt thou finde more freel than is mankynde, the whiche men full ofte be slayne by byting of flyes, or elis with entryng or crepyng wormes in to the priuytees of mannes body. But where shall men fynden any man that may exercysen or haunten any right vpon an other man, but onely on hys body, or elis vpon thinges that ben lower than the body, the whiche I clepe fortunes possessyons?

Wayst thou haue euer any cõmaundemente ouer a free corage? Wayste thou remeue fro the estate of his propre rest, a thought that is sleuing togyder in him selfe by stedfast reson?

As whylom a tyraunt wende to confounde a free man of corage, he wende to constraine hym by tourmentes, to maken him discouere and accusen folke, that wysten of a conjuracyon, whyche I clepe a confederacy that was cast ayenst this tyraũt: but this freman bote of his owne tonge, and caste it in the vysage of thylke woode tyraunt. So that the turmẽtes that thys woode tyraunt wende to haue made mater of crueltie, this wise man made it mater of vertue. But what thynge is it that a man maye do to an other man, that he ne maye receyuen the same thynge of other folke in him selfe? Or thus: What may a man done to folke, that folke ne maye done to him the same? I haue herde tolde of Bulirides that was wonte to sleen hys geestes, that herbrodẽ in his house: and he was slayne hym selfe by Hercules that was his geste. Regulus had taken in batayle manye men of Affryke, and caste hem into fetters: but sone after he must yeuen his handes to be bounde with the cheynes of hem that he had whylom ouercomen. Wenest thou thã, that he be mighty that hath power to doone a thyng, that other ne maye done in him þ he hath in other? And yet more ouer, if so were þ these dignytes or powers hadde any propre or naturel goodnes inhem, neuer wolde they comen to shrewes. For contrayous thinges ne ben wõt to ben yfelowshyped togyders. Nature refuseth that contrayous thynges ben ioyned. And so as I am in certayne that wicked folke haue dignytees ofte tyme, than sheweth it wel that dignytees & powers ne ben not good of her owne kynde, sens that they suffren hem selfe to cleuen & ioyneth hem selfe to shrewes. And certaynly the same thyng may I most dignely iudgen and sayne of all the yeftes of fortune, that maye plenteously comen to shrewes, of whych yeftes I trow it ought be considered that no man doutesth that he is stronge, in whome he seeth strength: and in whome swyftnesse is, forthy is it that he is swyfte. Also musyke maketh musycyens, and physike maketh physycyens, and rethorike eke rethoriciẽs. For why, þ nature of euery thynge maketh hys proprete, ne it is not entremedled with the effecte of contrayous thynges. But certes ryches ne may not restrayne auarice vnstanched. Ne power ne maketh nat a man mighty ouer him selfe, which that vycious lustes holden destrayned with chaynes that ne mowen not be vnbounden. And dignitees, that be yeuen to shrewes folke, not onely ne maketh hem not digne, but sheweth rather all openly, that they bene vnworthy & indigne. And it is thus. For certes ye haue ofte seen clepen thynges with false names, that bearen hem in all the countreye, the whych names ben ful ofte reproued by the effecte of the same thynges. So that these vile ryches ne ought not by ryght to be clepen richesses, ne suche power ne ought not to be cleped power, ne such dignite ne ought not to be cleped dignyte. And at laste I maye conclude the same thynge of all the yeftes of fortune: In whiche there nys nothinge to be desyred, ne that hath in him selfe naturel bonte, as it is wel ysene, for neither they ioynen hem not alway to good men, ne maken hem alway good, to whom they ben ioyned.

Nouimus, quãtas dederit ruinas Urbe flãmata, patribusq; cesis, Fratre qui quondam ferus interẽpto matris effuso maduit cruore. Corpus et visu gelidum perertans, Ora non tinxit lachrymis: sed esse, Cẽsor extincti potuit deorũ is. &c.

xxx

We haue well knowen, howe manye great harmes and distructiõs were done by themperour Nero. He lete brenne the eyte of Rome, & made ire the senatours, & he cruel whylom slough his brother. And he was made moyste wyth the blode of his mother, that is to saye, he let serm a fyxteen the wombe of hys mother, to fine where he was conceyued, & he loked on every halue of her deed cold body, ne no teere werte his face, but he was so harde herted þ he myght be domes man or iudge of her deed beaute. And natheles yet gouerned this Nero by ceptre al the people þ Phebus may sen comyng fro his vttereste arising, til he hyd his beames vnder the wawes, that is to sayne, he gouerned al the peoples by ceptre imperyal, þ the sonne goth about fro Eest to West. And eke this Nero gouerned by ceptre al the peoples that be vnder the colde sterres, that high ten the Septentrions, that is to sayne, he gouerned al the peoples that be vnder the party of the North. And eke Nero gouerned all the peoples that the violent wynde Nothus shorteth and baketh the brennyng sandes by hys dry heate, þ is to say, al þ peoples in þ southe. But yet ne might nat al his power tourne the woodnesse of this wycked Nero. Alas it is a grenous fortune, as ofte as a wicked swerde is ioyned to cruel venym, that is to saye, bene mous cruelte to lordshyppe.

Tum ego. Scis (inquam) ipsa, minimum nobis ambitionem mortalium rerum fuisse dominatam. Sed materiam gerendis rebus optauimus, quo ne virtus cacta consenescerem. P. Et ilia. Atqui hoc vnum est. &c.

Iha̅ said I thus. Thou wotest wel thy selfe, that the couetise of mortal thynges ne hadden neuer lordshyp in me. But I haue well desyred mater of thynges to don, as who saith, I desyre to haue mater of gouernaunces ouer comynaltees, for vertue styl shulde not elden: that is to sayne, that leste er that he wexe olde, hys vertue that laye nowe styll, ne shulde not perysshe vnexercysed in gouernaunce of commune: for whyche men myght speken or wryten of hys good gouernement. Phi.

Forsothe (quod she) and that is a thyng that may drawen to gouernaunce suche herres as ben worthy and noble of her nature: But natheless it maye not drawen or tellen suche herres as bene ybrought to the ful perfection of vertue, that is to sayne couetyse of glorye and renome, to haue wel administred the commune thynges, or doone good deserres to pro fyte of the commune. For se nowe and consyder, howe lytel and howe voyde of al pryce is thylke glory, certayne thynge is as thou hast lerned by the demonstracion of Astronomye, that al the enuyronnyng of the erthe aboute, ne haue but the reason of a pricke, at the regarde of the greatnesse of the heauen, that is to sayne, that if ther were maked comparison of the erth to þ greatnesse of heuen, men wold iudgen in all that ne helde no space. Of the whiche lytel region of this worlde, the fourth parte of the erthe is inhabyted wyth lyuynge beestes that we knowe̅, as thou hast thy selfe ylerned by Ptholome that proueth it.

And if thou haddest wythdrawen and abated in thy thought for thylke fourthe partye, as muche space as the see and þ mareys conteynen and ouergone: as muche space as the region of drought ouerstretcheth, that is to sayn sandes and deserres, well vnneth shuld there dwelle̅ a eyght strayte place to þ habytacyon of men. And ye that be enuyroned and closed with the leste pricke of thilke pryche, thinken ye manifesten or publisshen your renome and done your name for to ben borne forthe. But your glory that is so narowe & so strayte throngen in to so lytel boundes, howe myckell conteyneth it in larges and in great doynge. And also serte therto, that many a nacyon dyuers of tonge and of maners, and eke of reason of her lyuynge, ben inhabyted in the close of thilke habytacle, the which nacyons what for difficulte of wayes, and what for dyuersyte of langage, and what for defaulte of vsage, and entrecomunynge of marchandyse: not onely the names of synguler men ne may not stretchen, but eke the fame of cyties maye not stretchen. At the last, certes in the tyme of Marcus Tullius as hym selfe wryte in hys boke þ the renome of the comune of Rome ne had not yet passed ne clomben ouer the mountayne that hyght Cancasus, & yet was Rome well waxen and redoubted of the Parthes, and eke of other folke enhabytynge aboute. Seest thou not than howe strayte and howe compressed is thilke glorie that ye trauayen, aboute to shewen and to moultyplye? Maye

than the glory of a synguler Romayne stretchen thyder as the fame of the name of Rome maye not clymben ne passen. And eke seest thou not that the maners of dyuers folke and her lawes ben discordant amonges hem self, so that thylke thyng that some men iuge worthy of prayseyng, other folke iudgen that, that is worthy of tourment. And herof cometh it that though a man delyteth hym in prayseyng of his renome, he may not in no wyse bryngē forthe ne spreden hys name to manye maner peoples, and therfore euery man ought to be apayde of hys glory ỳ is publyshed amonge hys owne neyghbours, and thylke noble renome shall be restrayned within the boundes of tho maner folke. But howe manye a man that was ful noble in his tyme, hath ỳ wretches and nedy forgetyng of wryters put oute of mynde and don away, all be it so ỳ certes thylke thynges prokyten lytell, the which thinges and wrytinges long and derke elde do away both hem and eke her auctours. But ye men semē to getten you a perdurabylite whā ye thynken in tyme comynge youre fame shall lasten. But natheless, yf thou wylte make comparison to the endeles spaces of eternite. What thing haste thou, by which thou mayst reioysen the of longe lastynge of thy name. For if there were made comparyson of the abydyng of a momente to ten thousande wynter, for as moche as bothe tho spaces ben ended, for yet hath the momente some porcyō of it, al though it be lytell. But natheless thylke selfe nombre of yeres, and eke as many yeres as therto may be multyplied, ne may not certes be comparisoned to the perdurabilite that is endeles. For of thynges whiche that haue ende maye be made comparison, but of thynges whiche that ben withouten ende, to thinges that haue ende may be maked no comparyson. And for thy is it that although renome as of longe tyme as euer the lyste to thynken, were thought, to ỳ regard of the eternite that is vnstaunchеable and infynite, it ne shoulde not only seme lytel, but plainly right nought. But ye semen certes ye can do nothing a right but if it be for the audience of the people, and for yle rumours. And ye forsaken the great worthynesse of conscience and of vertue, and ye seken your guerdons of the smale wordes of straunge folke. Haue nowe here and vnderstande in the lyghtnesse of suche pride and veine glory, howe a man shoned festynally and merily suche banyte. Whylom there was a man that had assayed with stryuynge wordes an other mā, the which not for visage of very vertue, but for proude vayne glorye, had taken vpon him falsely ỳ name of a philosophre. This rather man that I spake of, thought he wold assay, whether he thilke were a philosophre or no, that is to saye, yf that he wolde haue suffred lightly, in pacyence, the wronges that were doue to him. This fained philosophre toke pacience a lytell whyle: and whan he had receyued wordes of outrage, he as in stryuinge ayen a reioysyng of hym selfe, sayde at laste thus. Understandest thou not, that I am a philosophre. That other man answerde againe bytingly and sayd: I had well vnderstand it, if thou haddest holde thy tonge stil. But what is it to me noble worthy mē, for certes of suche folke spekē I ỳ seken glory with vertue. What is it (qō he) what accreyneth fame to suche folke, whan the body is resolued by the deth at the last. for yf so be that men dyen in all, that is to say body and soule, the which thyng oure reason defendeth vs to byleue: than is there no glory in no wyse. For what shulde thylke glory be, whan he, of whom thylke glorie is sayde to be, nys eyght naught in no wyse. And yf the soule whyche that hath in it selfe science of good werkes, vnbounder from the prison of therthe, wendeth freely to the heuen, dispiseth it not than al erthly occupacion, and beynge in heuen reioyseth that it is exempte from all erthly thynges as who sayth, than recketh the soule neuer of no glory of renome of this worlde.

Quicunqz solam mente precipiti petit,
Summumqz credit gloriam, Late patēres
Cernat plagas, Artumqz terrarū situ,
Breue repiere non valentis ambitum. &c.

Who so that wyth ouerthrowynge thought only seketh glory of fame, and weneth ỳ it be souerayne good, let him loken vpon the brode shewynge countreys of the heuen, and vpon the strayte sete of this erthe, and he shal be ashamed of the encreasle of his name, that maye not fulfyll the lytel compas of the erthe. O what coueyten proude folke to lyken vp her neckes in vdle in the deedly yoke of this worlde. For al though that renome yspradd passyng tokens

peoples

peoples, both by dyuers tōges, and although great houses of kynredes shynen by clere tytles of honours, yet natheles deth dyspiseth al high glory of fame, and deth wrappeth togythers the hygh heedes and the lowe, & maketh egal and euen the hyest with the lowest. Where wōnen nowe the bones of trew Fabricius? What is nowe Brutus, or sterne Caton? The thynne fame yet lastyng of her ydle names, is marked with a fewe lettres. But although that we haue knowen the fayre wordes of ꝑ fame of hem, it is not peuen to knowe hem that ben deed and cōsumpt. Liggeth thā stylall vtterlye vnknowable, ne fame ne maketh you not knowe. And if ye wene to lyue the lenger for wynde of youre mortall name, whan one cruel day shal rauysshe you: than is the seconde dwellyng ouer you close. The first dethe he clepeth here the departing of ꝑ body, and the seconde dethe here the styntyng of the remome of fame.

Sed ne me inexorabile contra fortunam gerere bellum putes, est aliquando, cum de hominibus fallax illa non nihil bene merretur: tum scilicet cum se aperit. &c.

But for as moche as thou knowest not wenen (qd she) that I beare an vnmeasurable batayle ayenst fortune, yet somtyme it befalleth that she (dyscreuable) deserueth to haue ryght good thāke of men: and that is whan she her self openeth, and whā she discouereth her fronte, & sheweth her maners. Peraventure yet vnderstādest ꝑ not that I shal say. It is a wondre ꝑ I desire to tel, and therfore vneth may I vnpityē my sentence with wordes. For I deme ꝑ contrayous fortune profiteth more to men thā fortune debonayre. For alway whan fortune semeth debonayre, thā she lieth falsely, byheting the hope of welfulnesse. But forsothe contrayous fortune is alwaye sothfaste, whan she sheweth her self vnstable through her chaungyng. The amiable fortune discreyueth folke: the contrarye fortune teacheth. Thamyable fortune blyndeth with the beautie of her false goodes, the herres of folkes that vsen hem. The contrarye fortune vnbyndeth hem, wyth the knowyng of freele welefulnesse. Thamyable fortune mayste thou sene alway wyndy and flowyng, & euer misknowyng of her self. The cōtrary fortune is attempre and restreyned and wyse, thorowe exercise of her aduersyte. At the laste amyable fortune wyth her flaterynges, draweth myswandryng men fro the souerayne good: the contrarious fortune leadeth ofte folke ayen to sothfaste goodes, and halseth hem ayen as wt an hoke. Knowest thou than that thou oughtest to leten thys a lytell thyng, that this aspre and horryble fortune hath discouered to the, the thoughtes of thy trew frendes? For why, this yike fortune hath departed and vncouered to the both the certayne vysages, and eke the doutous vysages of thy felawes. Whā she departed away fro the, she toke away her frendes and laft the thy frendes. Nowe whan thou were ryche and welefull, as the semed, with howe mykell woldest thou haue bought the ful knowynge of thys, that is to sayne, the knowyng of thy very frendes? Nowe playne ꝑ not than of rychesse lorne, sythe thou haste founde the moste precious kynd of rychesse, that is to sayne, thy very frendes.

Quod mundus stabili fide, Concordes variat vices, Quod pugnancia semina, Fedus perpetuum tenent. &c.

That the world wt stable fayth varyeth accordable chaungynges, that the contrarious qualytees of elementes holden amonge hem selfe alyaunce perdurable, that Phebus ꝑ sonne wyth his golde charyot bringeth forth ꝑ rosy day, that the moone hath commaundemente ouer the nyghtes: whyche nyghtes Esperus the euen sterre hath, that the see gredy to flowen constrayneth wyth a certayne ende hys floodes, so that it is not lefull to stretche hys brode termes or boundes vpon the erthe: All this ordinaunce of thynges is bounden with loue, ꝑ gouerneth erthe and see, and also hath cōmaundement to the heuen. And yf this loue slaked the brideis, al thynges that now louen hem togythers wolden make batayle contynuelly, & stryuen to fordone the facion of thys worlde, the which they now leden in accordable fayth, by fayre mourynges. This loue holdeth togider people ioyned wt an holy bonde, & knyt'eth sacrament of mariage of chaste loues. And loue endeth lawes to true felawes.

O wicched were mankynde if thilke lowe that gouerneth the heuē, gouerned your corages.

Here endeth the seconde boke, and here folowyth the thirde.

Jm cantum illa finierat, cum me audiendi auidum, stupentemq; attentis adhuc auribus carminis mulcedo dekixerat. Itaq; paulo poſt, O inquam summum lassorū solamen animorum, quantum me &c.

BY this she had ended her songe: whan the swetenesse of her byte had thrugh perced me, ꝑ was desyrous of herkenynge. And I astonyed had yet streyght mine eeres, that is to saine, to herken the bet what she shuld say, so that lytel here after I sayd thus. O thou ꝑ art souerayne comfort of corages anguisshous, so thou hast remounted and norisshed me with the weyght of thy sentences, and with delyte of syngyng, so that I trowe not that I be vnperegall to the strokes of fortune: as who saith, I dare wel now suffren al thassautes of fortune, and well defende me from her. And tho remedies, whiche that thou saydest here before, that weren right sharpe, not onelye that I am not agrysen of hem nowe, but I desyrous of hearynge, aske greatly to heren the remedyes. Than sayd she thus. That feled I well (quod she) whan that thou ententyfe and styl, rauysshedest my wordes: and I abode tyll thou haddest suche habyte of thy thought, as thou hast nowe, or elis tyl that I my self had maked it to ꝑ same habyte, whyche that is a more very thyng. And certes the remenaunt of thinges that ben yet to say ben suche, that first whan men taste hem, they bene byttynge: But whan they bene receyued within a wight, than ben they swete. But for thou saiest that thou art so desyrous to herken hem, with how great brenning wouldest thou glowen, if thou wystes whyder I wolde leden the. B. Whider is that (qō I) ꝑ. To thilke very blysfulnesse (qō she) of whiche thyne herte dremeth. But for as much as thy sight is occupyed & dissourbed of erthly thinges, thou mayst not yet sene thylke seife weiefulnesse. B. Do (quod I) and shewe me what thylke very welfulnes is, I pray the without taryeng. ꝑ. That wol I gladly done (qō she) for cause of the. But I woll fyrste marken by wordes, & I wyll enforcen me to enforme the thilke false cause of blisfulnesse, which ꝑ thou more knowest: so that whan thou hast beholden thylke false goodes, and turned thyne eyen so to that other syde, thou maye knowen the clerenesse of very blysfulnesse.

Qui serere ingenuū volet agrum, Liberet atua prius fruticibus, falce rubos, filicemq; resecet. &c.

WHo so wol sowe a felde plenteous, let him fyrste delyuere it of thornes, and kerue a sonder with his hoke the bushes and the fern, so that ꝑ corne maye cōme heuy of eres and of grines. Hony is the more swete if mouthes haue fyrste tasted sauours that be wycke. The stres shinen more agreably, whan the wynde Nothus letteth his plungy blastes. And after that Lucifer the day sterre hath chased away the darke nyght, the day the fayrer leadeth the rosen hors of the sonne. And right so thou, beholdyng fyrst the false goodes begyn to withdrawe thy necke fro the erthly affections, and afterwardes the verye goodes shullen entren into thy corage.

Tum dekixo paululum vultu, et velut in angustam sue mentis sedem recepta, sic cepit. ꝑ Omnis mortalium cura quā multiplicū studiorum labor exercet. &c.

THo fastened she a lytel ꝑ syght of her eē, & she withdrewe her, right as it were in to ꝑ straynt secte of her thought: and begā to speake right thus. All ꝑ cures (quod she) of mortal folke, which ꝑ trauailen hem in many maner studyes, gon certes by diuers wayes: but natheles they enforcen hem al to comen onely to the ende of blysfulnes. And blysfulnes is sayde a good, that who so hath gotten it, he ne maye ouer that thyng more desyre. And thys thyng forsoth is so souerayne good, that it cōtayneth in hym selfe al maner of goodes, to the which good if there fayled any thyng, it myghte not ben souerayn good, for than were some good out of this souerayn good, that might be desyred,

ryed. Nowe is it clere and certayne, that blis
fulneſſe is a parfyte ſtate, by the congrega-
cion of al goodes, the whiche bliſſfulneſſe (as
I haue ſayd) al mortal folke enforcen hem to
gete by diuers wayes. For why, ỹ couetyſe
of euery good is naturelly planted in the her-
tes of men: but the miſwandring errour, miſ-
leedeth hem in to falſe goodes. Of the whiche
men, ſome of hem weneu that ſouerayn good
be to lyuen without nede of any thynge. And
other men demen, ỹ ſouerayne good be right
digne of reuerence, and enforcen hem to be re
uerenced amonge her neighbours by the ho-
nours that they haue goten. And ſome folke
there ben that holden ỹ ryght hye power be
ſouerayn good, and enforcen hem for to reig-
nen, or elis to ioynen hem to hem that reignen.
And it ſemeth to othe folke, that nobleſſe of
renome be the ſouerain good, and haſten hem
to getten hem glorious name by the artes of
werre or of peace. And many folke meſuren
and geſſen, that ſouerayne good be ioye and
gladneſſe, and wenen that it be ryght bliſſful
thing to plungen in voluptuous delites. And
there ben ſome folke, that entrechaungen the
cauſes & the endes of theſe forſayde goodes:
As they that deſyren richeſſes to haue power
and delytes, or elis they deſyre power for to
haue money, or for cauſe of renóme. In theſe
thynges and ſuche other is turned all the en-
tencion of deſyrynges and werkes of men, as
thus: Nobleſſe and fauoure of people, whych
that yeueth to all men, as it ſemeth hem, a
maner clereneſſe of renomme: and wyfe and
chyldren, that men deſyren, for cauſe of de-
lyte and meryneſſe. But forſoth frendes ne
ſhullen not be rekened amonge the goodes of
fortune, but of vertue, for it is a ful holy ma-
ner thyng. All theſe other thynges forſoth be
taken for cauſe of power, or elis for cauſe of
delite. Certes now am I redy to referren the
goodes of the body, to theſe forſayd thinges
abouen: For it ſemeth that ſtrẽgth and gret-
neſſe of body yeuen power and worthyneſſe,
and that beaute and ſwyftneſſe yeuen glorye
and renóme: and helth of body ſemeth to ye-
uen delyte. In al theſe thinges it ſemeth only
that bliſſfulneſſe is deſired: for why, thylke
thyng that euery man deſireth moſte ouer all
thynges, he demeth that it be ſouerayn good.
But I haue defined, that bliſſfulneſſe is ſouve-
rayne good, for which euery wight demeth ỹ
thilke eſtate that he deſireth ouer al thinges,
that it be bliſſfulneſſe. Nowe haſt thou than
before thyn eyen almoſte al ỹ purpoſed forme
of the welefulneſſe of mankynde, that is to
ſayne, richeſſe, honours, power, glorie and de-
lites, the which delite only conſidred he Epi-
curus, and iuged and eſtabliſſhed that delyte
is the ſouerayne good: for as muche as all o-
ther thynges, as him thought, byreft awaye
ioy and mirthe from the herte. But I returne
agayne to the ſtudies of men, of whiche men
the corage alway reherſeth and ſeketh the ſo
uerayne good, al be it ſo that it be with a dyr-
ked memorie, but he note by whiche pathe,
right as a dronken man note nought by which
pathe he may returne home to hys houſe. Se
meth it than that folke forleyen and erren to
enforcen hem to haue nede of nothing. Certes
there is none other thyng, that may ſo muche
perfourmen bliſſfulneſſe, as an eſtate plẽteous
of al goodes, that ne hath nede of none other
thyng, but that is ſuffiſaũt of hym ſelfe vnto
him ſelfe. And ſoleyen ſuche folke than ỹ we-
nen, that thylke thynge ỹ is right good, that
it is eke right worthy of honor & of reuerẽce:
certes nay. For that thynge nys neyther foule
ne worthy to be diſpiſed, that wel nygh al the
entencion of mortal folke trauailen to get it.
And power eke ought not to be rekened amõ
ges goodes. What elſe for it nis not to wene,
that thylke thyng that is moſte worthy of al
thynges, be feble and without ſtrength. And
clereneſſe of renome, ought that to ben diſpi-
ſed. Certes ther may no man forſake, that al
thinge that is right excellẽt and noble, that it
ne ſemeth be right clere & renomed. For cer-
tes it nedeth not to ſay, that bliſſfulneſſe be an
guiſhous ne drerye, ne ſubiect to greuaunces
ne ſorowes, ſens that in right lyrell thynges
folke ſeken to haue and to vſen that may de-
lyten hem. Certes theſe ben the thinges that
men willen and deſyren to geten: and for this
cauſe deſiré they richeſſes, dignities, regnes,
glorie, and delites. For therby wenen they to
haue ſuffyſaunce, honoure, power, renomme,
and gladneſſe. Than is it good, that men ſe-
ken thus by ſo many dyuers ſtudies, in why-
che deſire it may not lightly be ſhewed, howe
great is the ſtrengthe of nature. For howe ſo
men haue diuers ſentences and diſcordinges,
algates men accorden all in louynge the ende
of good.

Quantas rerum fleetit habenas Natura

potens, quibus immensum, Legibus orbem
Pronida seruet, Stringatq; ligans treesoluto,
Singula nexu, placet arguto, Fidelibus
lentis promere cantu. &c.

Vos quoq; o terrena animalia, tenuem
imagine, uestrum tamen principium sonatis. Verumq; illum beatitudinis finem, licet
minime perspicaci. &c.

IT lyketh me to shewe by subtyl songe with slacke and delitable sown of strynges, howe that nature mightely encline-th & flyeth by the gouernement of thynges, and by suche lawe the purueyable kepeth the great worlde, and howe the byndynge restrayneth al thynges by a bonde that maye not be vnbounden. Al be it so that the lyons of the countreye of Pene beren the fayre chaynes, and taken meates of the handes of folke, that yeuen it hem, and dreden her sturdye maysters, of whiche they be wont to suffre beatynges, yf that her horrible mouthes ben bledde, that is to sayn, of beestes deuoured: her corage of tyme passed that hath benydde & rested repaireth ayen, and they rozen grenously, and remembren on her nature, and slaken her neckes from her chaynes vnbounde, and her maister firste to torne with blody teth, assayeth ỳ woode wrathes of hem; that is to sayne, they fretten her maister. And the iangelyng birde that singeth on the hye braunches, that is to sayne, in the wodde, and after is enclosed in a strayte cage al though the pleyenge besyneſſe of men yeue hem honyed drynkes, and large meates with swete studye: yet natheles if thilke bryde skippyng out of her strayte cage, seeth the agreable shadowes of ỳ wodes, she defouleth with her fete her meate yshadde, & seketh on mornyng onely the woode, and twyzeth desiryng the woode with her swete wise. The yerde of a tre that is haled adown by mighty strēgth boweth redily the croppe adowne: but if that the hande that is bente let it gone agayne, anon the croppe loketh vpzyght to the heuen. The sonne Phebus that falleth at euen in the westren wawes, returneth ayen eftsones his carte by a pryuy pathe there as it is wonte arise. Al thiges seke ayen to her proper course, and all thynges reioysen on her returnyng agayne to her nature: ne none ordinaunce is betaken to thynges, but that hath ioyned the ende to the begynnynge, and hath made the course it selfe stable, that it chaunge not fro his proper kynde.

CErtes also ye mē ỳ ben erthly beestes dreamen alwaye your begining, al though it be with a thyn imag acio, & by a maner thought, al be it nat clerely ne perfetly, ye loke fro a ferre to thilke very tine of blisfulnes. And therfore naturel entencion leadeth you to thilke very good, but many maner errours mistourneth you therfro. Consider now if ỳ be thilke thinges, by which a man weneth to get hi blisfulneſſe if that he may co en to thilke rude ỳ he weneth to come to by nature. For if ỳ money, honours, or these other forsayd thinges byngen men to such a thing that no good ne fayle them ne semeth to fayle: Certes than wold I graūt that they be maked blisful by thynges that they haue goten. But if so be that thylke thinges ne mowē not performe that they byheten, and that there be defaute of many goodes, shewth it not than clerely ỳ false beaute of blisfulneſſe is knowen & atteynt in thilke thiges. Fyrst & forwarde thou thy selfe, that haddest habundaunce of rychesse nat longe agon, I aske the ỳ in thabundaunce of al thilke ryches, if thou were neuer anguishous or sorye in thy corage of any wronge or greuaūce, that betyd the in any syde. B. Certes (qō I) it ne remembreth me not, that euer I was so fre of my thought, that I ne was alwaye in anguisshe of somwhat. P. And was that not (qō she) for ỳ the lacked somwhat that thou noldest not haue lacked. Or els thou haddest that thou noldest haue had. B. Right so it is (qō I) P. Than desirest thou ỳ presence of ỳ one, and thabsence of that other. B. I graunt wel (qō I) P. For sothe (qō she) than nedeth ther somwhat that euery man desireth. B. Ye there nedeth (qō I) P. Certes (qō she) and ne that hath lacke or nede of aught, nys not in euery way sufficiaūt to hym selfe. B. No (qō I) P. And thou (qō she) in al the plente of thy ryches ne haddest thilke lacke of sufficiaunce. B. What els (qō I) P. Than may not riches maken that a man nis nedy, ne that he be sufficient to him selfe: and yet that was it that they byheten as it semed. And eke certes I trowe

that

that this be gretly to cõsider, that monye hath not in his owne kynde, that it ne may ben bynomed of hem that haue it maugre hem. B. I knowe it wel (qõ I) p. Why shuldest ꝑ not beknowen it (qõ she) when euery day ꝑ strenger folke benomen it from the feble maugre hem? Fro whence come els al these foraynes cõplaynes, quarels, or pledynges, but for that men aske her money that hath ben bynomed hem by strength or by gyle, & alwaye maugre hem? B. Right so it is (qõ I) p. Than hath a man nede (qõ she) to seken him forayn helpe, by which he may defend his money. B. Who may saye naye (qõ I) p. Certes (qõ she) and him neded none helpe, if he ne had no money that he myght lese. B. That is doutles (qõ I) p. Than is this thyng turned in to ꝑ cõtrary (qõ she) for rychesse, that men wenen shulde maken suffysaunce, they maken a man rather haue nede of forayn helpe. Whiche is the maner or the gyle (qõ she) that rychesse may dryuen away nede? Riche folke may they neither haue honger ne thurste? These riche men may they fele no colde on their limes i wenter? but thou wilt answere ꝑ ryche men haue ynough, wherwith they may staũchen her hõger, and slaken her thurst, & done away colde. In thys wyse may nede ben cõforted by rychesse, but certes nede ne maye not all vtterly be done away. For yf thys nede that alway is gapyng and gredy, be fulfylled wyth rychesse and any other thyng, yet dwelleth than a nede ꝑ mote be fulfylled, I holde me styl, and tel not how that lytel thing suffiseth to nature: but certes to auarice suffyseth not ynoughe of nothyng. For syn that rychesse ne may not al don away nede, and they maken theyr owne nede, what maye it than be, that ye wenen that rychesses mowen yeuen you suffysaunce?

Quamuis fluente dines auri gurgite, Non expleturas cogat auarus opes. &c.

All were it so, that a noble couetous man hadde a ryuer or a gutter fletyng al of golde, yet shulde it neuer staunch his couetise: and although he had hys necke charged with precious stones of the reed see: And though he dore his feldes plẽteous with an hũdred oxen, neuer ne shal his biting beslines forleten hym while he lyueth, ne the lyght richesses ne shal not bearen him companye when he is deed.

Sed dignitates honorabilem, reuerendũq; cui prouenerint, reddunt. Num vis ea eſſe magistratibus, vt vtentium mentibus virtutes inserant, vitia depellant? &c.

But dignities to whome they be comen, maken they him honorable and reuerent? Haue they not so great strength that they maye purtẽ vertue in hertes of folkes ꝑ vsen the lordship of hem, or els may they don away ꝑ vices. Certes they be not wõt to don away wickednes, but they be wont rather to shewe wickednesse. And therof cometh it that I haue right great disdayn, that dignities bẽ yeuen to wicked men. For whiche thing Catullus cleped a cõsul of Rome (that highte Nonyus) postome of boche, as who sayth, he cleped him a congregacion of vyces in his brest, as a postome is ful of corrupcyon: All were Nonius set in a chaire of dignite. Seest thou not than, howe great vilonies dignities done to wicked men? certes vnworthynesse of wicked men shulde be the lasse sene, if they were renomed of none honour. Certes thou thy selfe ne mightest not be brought with as many perils as thou myghtest suffre, ꝑ thou woldest beare the magistrate with Decorate, that is to sayne, that for peryl that myght befal the by offence of the kyng Theodorike, thou noldest not be felaw in gouernaunce with Decorate, whan thou saw that he had wicked corage of a lycorous shrewe and of an accusour. Ne I may not for such honours iugen hem worthy of reuerẽce, that I deme and hold vnworthy to haue thylke same honours. Nowe if thou sawe a man that were fulfylde of wisdome, certes thou ne myghtest not deme ꝑ he were vnworthy to ꝑ honour, or els to the wisedom of whiche he is fulfylled. B. No (quod I) p. Certes (qõ she) dignities apertaynen proprerly to vertue, and vertue transporteth dignite anon to thylke man, to whiche she hir selfe is conioyned. And for as muche as honours of people ne maye not make folke digne of honour, it is wel sene clerelye, ꝑ they ne haue no propre beaute of dignite. And yet men oughten take more hede in this: for if a wight be in so muche the more outcast, that he is dispised of moste folke, so as dignite ne maye not maken shrewes worthy of no reuerence, than maketh dignite shrewes rather dispised thẽ prai

sed, the

sed, þ which shrewes dignite sheweth to moche folke. And forsothe not vnpunished, that is to sayn, that shrewes reuengen hem ayenwarde vpon dignities. For they yelden ayen to dignities as great guerdõs, whan they dispotten & defoulen dignities with her vilonye. And for as muche as thou now knowest, that thylke very reuerence ne maye nat comen by these shadowy transitorye dignities, vnderstonde nowe thus: that if a man had vsed and had many maner dignities of consuls & were peraventure comen amonge straũge nacions, shulde thilke honour maken hym worthipful and redouted of straũge folke. Certes if that honour of people were a naturel yefte to dignities, it ne might neuer cessen no wher amõg no manr folke to done hys office. Right as a fyre in euery countrey ne stynteth not to enchauffen & maken hote. But for as muche as for to ben honourable or reuerent, ne cometh not to folke of her propre strength of nature, but onely of the false opinion of folke, that is to sayne, that wenen þ dignities maken folke digne of honours: anone therfore whan they comen ther as folke ne knowẽ not thylke dignities, her honours vanishen awaye and that anon. But þ is amonge straunge folke mayst thou sayn. Ne amonges hem there they were borne, ne dured not thylke dignities alwaye. Certes the dignite of the pronostry of Rome was whylom a great power: nowe is it nothynge but an ydle name, and the rente of the senatorie a great charge. And if a wight whilom had thoffice to taken hede to the vitayles of the people, as of corne & of other thynges, he was holden amõges hem great. But what thyng is more now outcaste than thylke pronostrye. As I haue sayd a lytel here beforne, that thylke thyng þ hath no propre beaute of it selfe, receyueth somtyme pryce & shynynge, and somtyme leseth it by thopinion of vsaunces. Now if that dignities than ne mowe not make folke digne of reuerence, & if that dignities were foule of her wyl, by þ fylthe of shrewes. And yf dignities lesen her shynynge by chaũgynge of tymes, & if they weren foule by estimacion of people, what is it that they han in hem selfe of beaute, þ ought to be desyred: as who sayth, none: than ne mowen they yeuen no beaute of dignite to none other.

Quamuis se tyrio superbus ostro Comeret et niueis lapillis &c.

All be it so, that þ proude Nero with al his wode luxure, lete him & appareilled him w̃ fyne purpure of Tirie, & with white peeries. Algates yet were he hateful to al folk, þ is to sayn that al was he behated of al folkes, yet this wicked Nero had great lothynge. And yet whilome to the reuerent Senatours the worthynful seates of dignites. Unworthyful seates he cleperth here, for that Nero that was so wicked yafe the dignities.

Who wolde than resonablye wenen, that blyssfulnesse were in suche honours, as ben yeuen by vicious shrewes.

In hero regna, regnumq; familiaritas ei ficere potentem valeat. Quidni &c.

But reignes & familiarites of kinges, may they make a man to ben mighty. How els? whi his blissfulnesse dureth perpetually. But certes þ olde age of tyme passed, & eke of present tyme nowe, is ful of ensãples, how þ kynges haue chaũged into wretchednesse, out of her welfulnes. O, a noble thyng, and a clere thynge is power, that nys not founden mighty to kepe it selfe. And yf that power of realmes be authour & maker of blissfulnesse, yf thylke power lacketh on any syde, amenuseth it nat thilke blyssfulnesse, and bringeth in wretchednesse. But yet al be it so, that the realmes of mãkinde stretchen brode, yet more there neben muche folke, ouer which that euery kyng ne hath no lordshyppe ne cõmaundement. And certes vpon thylke syde that power failleth, whiche that maketh folke blissful. Right on þ same syde no power entreth vndermeth that maketh hem wretches. In thys maner than moten kynges haue more porcyon of wretchednesse than of welefulnesse.

Tyraun that was kynge of Cecyle, that had assayd the peryl of hys estate, shewed by symilitude the dredes of realmes by gastnesse of a swerde, that honge ouer the herd of hys famylyer. What thynge is than this power, that maye not done awaye the bytynges of besynesse, ne eschewe the pryckes of drede. And certes yet wolden they lyuen in syckernesse, but they maye nat. And yet they glorifyen hem in her power. Holdest thou than

that

that thilke mā be mighty, ꝑ thou seest that he wolde done that he maye not done. And holdest thou than hym a myghty man, that hath enuyoned hys sydes with men of armes or sergeaūtes, & dredeth more hem that he maketh agaīs, than they dreden hym, and that is putte in the handes of hys seruauntes, for he shulde seme myghtye. But of famylyers or seruauntes of kynges, why shulde I tell the any thyng, sith that I my selfe haue shewed the, that realmes hem selfe ben ful of great feblesse. The whiche famylyers certes the royal power of kynges in hoole estate and in estate abated, ful ofte thzoweth adowne.

Nero constrayned Senecke hys famylyer and hys mayster, to chesen on what dethe he wolde dye. Antonius cōmanded that knighters flowen with her swerdes Papinā his famylyer, whiche Papinyan hadde ben longe time ful myghty amonges hem of the courte. And yet certes they wolden both haue renoūced her power. Of whiche two Senecke enforced hym to yeuen to Nero his richesse, and also to haue gone in to solytarye exile. But whan the great weight, that is to sayn, of lordes power or of Fortune, drawe th hem that shulden fall, neyther of hem ne myght do that he wolde. What thing is than thylke power, that though men haue it, yet they ben agaste, & whan thou woldest haue it, thou darst not fyght. And yf thou woldest forleten it, thou mayst nat eschewen it. But wheder such men ben frendes at nede, as ben counsayled by fortune, and nat by vertue. Certes suche folke as weiful fortune maketh frēdes, cōtrarious fortune maketh hem enemies. And what pestylence is more mighty for to anoy a wight, than a familyer enemye.

Qui se volet esse potentem, Animos domet ille feroces: Nec victa libidine colla. &c.

WHo so wol be mighty, he mote daūten his cruell corages, ne put nat hys necke ouercomen, vnder the foule raynes of lechery. For al be it so, that the lordshyppe stretche so ferre, that the countrey of Inde quaketh at thy cōmaundemētes, or at thy lawes. And that the last yle in the see, that hyght Tyle, be thrale to the: yet yf thou mayst nat putten away thy foule derke desyres, and dryuen out fro the, wzetched complayntes: Certes it nys no power that thou haste.

Gloria vero quā fallax sepe, quā turpis est. Vnde non iniuria tragicus exclamat. O gloria gloria millibus mortalium nihil a lind tacta, nisi aurium inflatio magna. &c.

BUt glozie, howe deceyuable & howe ful is it ofte. For which thing, not skilfully a tragedie, ꝑ is to sayn a maker of ditees that highte tragedies, cried, & sayde. O glozy glozy, qd he ꝑ nart nothinge eis to thoulsādes of folkes but a swelling of eares. For many haue ful great renome by the false opinion of the people.

And what thynge may ben thought fouler than suche prayslynge. For thylke folke that ben praysed falsly, they mooten nedes haue shame of her prayslynges. And yf that folke haue getten hem thanke or prayslynge by her deseries: What thing hath thilke prise eched or encreased to the conscience of wyse folke, that mesuren her good, nat by the rumoure of the people, but by the sothefastnesse of conscience. And if it seme a fayze thynge, a man to haue encreased and spzad hys name, than foloweth it, ꝑ it is demed to ben a foule thig, if it ne be yspzadde and encreased. But as I sayd a litel here befoze, that sith ther mote nedes ben many folkes, to whiche folke the renome of a man ne maye nat comen, it befalleth, that he that thou weneſt be glozyous & renomed, semeth in the nexte part of therthes, to ben without glozye and without renome. And certes amōges these thinges I ne trowe nat that the prise and the grace of the people, nys neither worthy to ben remembzed, ne cometh of wyse iugemēt, ne is ferme perdurably. But nowe of this name of gētilesse: what man is it that ne may wel sene howe vayne & howe slyrig it is. For if ꝑ name of gentylesse be referred to renome & cleerenesse of lynage, than is gentyl name but a forayn thyng, ꝑ is to say, to hem ꝑ glozifyen hem of her lynage. For it semeth ꝑ gentyles be a maner prayslig, that cometh of ꝑ desertes of auncesters. And if prayslynge maketh gentylnesse, than moten they nedes ben gentyl, that ben praysed. For whiche thyng it foloweth, that if thou ne haue no gentylnesse of thy selfe, that is to sayne

prise,

ryche, that cometh of thy desert. For ayne gentylesse ne maketh the nat gentyll. But certes if there be any good in gentylesse, I trowe it be al onely thys: that it semeth as that a maner necessite be imposed to gētylmen, for that they ne shulde nat outragen or forleauen fro the vertues of her noble kynred.

Omne hominum genus in terris similli surgit ab hoꝛtu: Unus enim rerum pater est, Unus cuncta ministrat. &c.

Al the lynage of men, þ den in erth bē lēblable of birth. One alone is father of thinges: one alone ministreth al thinges: he yaf to þ sun his beames: he yaf to þ moone her hornes: he yaf to men þ erth: he yaf the sterres to þ heuen: he closed with mēbres the soules that camen from hys hye seate. Than comen al mortall folke of nolde serd. Why noysen ye or bolten of your elders? For yf ye loke your beginning and god youre father author and your maker. Than nys there no forlyued wyght or vngentyll but yf he nourishe hys corage vnto vices, and forlete hys proper kynde.

Quid autem de corporis voluptatibus loquar, quarum appetentia quidem plena est anxietatis. &c.

But what shal I sain of delices of body, of which delices þ delices ben ful of anguishes, & þ fulfilliges of hē bē ful of penaūce: how great sickenesses & how great sorowes vnsufferable, right as a maner fruite of wickednes ben thilke delices wōte to bringen to þ bodies of folke þ vsē hem? of which delices I not what ioye may ben had of her mouynge. But thys wote I wel, that who so euer wol remembrē hym of hys luxures, he shal wel vnderstande, that the issues of deiyces ben sorouful & sory. And yf thylke delices mowe make folke blysful, than by þ same cause moten these bestes ben cleped blysful. Of which bestes al the entencō hasteth to fulfyl her bodely ioyte. And the gladnesse of wife and childzen were an honest thing, but it hath ben sayd that it is ouer mokel ayenst kynde, that chyldren haue ben founden tourmentours to her fathers, I not howe many. Of which chilt renhowe bysines is euery condicion, it nedeth not to telien it thy, that hast er thys tyme assayed it, and art yet nowe anguishous. In this tyme approue I the sentēce of my disciple Euripidis, þ sayd, that he þ hath no childzen is wrieful by infortune.

Habet hoc voluptas omnis stimulis agitatas: Ipsumq; par dolorem vbi gratia mella fuit: Fugit et nimis tenaci frenatas corda morsu. &c.

Euery delyte hathe thys that it anguisheth hem with pyckes that serue it. It resembleth to these stinge flyes that we clepen bees, that after that he hathe shedde hys agreable honyes, he flyeth away, and stingeth the herte of hem that ben smytten with byttre age ouerlonge holden.

Nihil igitur dubium est, quin he ad breuitudinem vite deuia quedam sint: nec perducere eo quemquā valeant. &c

Now it is no dout than, þ these wayes ne ben a maner mishdiges to blysfulnes: ne þ they ne mowen not ledē folke thō, as they beheten to leden hem. But with how great harmes these forsayd wayes bē enlased, I shal shewe you shortly. For why, if þ enforcest the to assemble money, thou must bereuen him his money þ hath it. And if thou wolt shinen with dignities, thou muste beseechen and supplyen hem, that seuen tho dignities. And yf thou coueytest by honour to gone before other folkes, thou shalt defoule thy selfe thorowe hūblesse of asking. If thou desirest power, thou shalt by awaites of thy subiectes anoiously be enbusshed under by many parels. Alkest thou glorye thou shalt ben so distracte by aspre thynges, that thou shalt forgone sikernesse. And if thou woldest leden thy lyfe in delites, euery wight shal dispise the and forleten the, as thou that arte thral to thing, that is vyght foule and bitel, that is to sayne, seruaunt to thy bodye. Nowe is it wel yseene, howe lyteel and howe bitel possessyon they coueyten, that putten the goodes of the body aboue her owne reason. For mayste thou surmounten these elephantes in greatnesse or in weight of body? or mayste thou ben stronger than the bul: mayst thou be swyfter than the tygre? Beholde thy-

spaces

ynges & the stablenesse, and the swyft course of heuen, and shynte sonetyme to wondren on soute thynges. The whiche heuen certes nys nat rather for these thynges to be wondred vpon, than for the reason by whyche it is gouerned. But the shynynge of thy forme, that is to sayne, the beaute of thy body, how swiftly passyng is it, and howe transitorye, certes it is more flytynge than the mutabilyte of flouris of the sõmer season. For so as Aristotell telleth, that yf ỹ men had eyen of a beeste that hight Lynx, so that the lokynge of folke myzt peeren through tho thynges that withstõde it. Who so loked than in thentraples of ỹ body of Alcibiades, that was full fayre in ỹ superficie without, it shulde seme ryght foule. And for thy, yf thou semest fayre, thy nature ne maketh nat that, but the dyscevuaunce of feblenesse of the eyen that loken. But prayse the goodes of the body as muche as euer thy lyste, so that thou knowe al gates ỹ what so it be, that is to sayne, of the goodes of the body, whiche that thou wondrest vpon, maye ben dilroyed or elis dissolued by the hert of a feuer of thre dayes. Of whyche forsayd thynges I may reducē this shortly in a sõme, that these worldly goodes, which that ne mowen neuen that they behyghten, ne ben not parfite by the congregacion of all goodes, that they ne ben not wayes ne pathes that bringē men to blisfulnesse, ne maken men to be blisful.

Heu heu que miseros tramite deuios abducit ignorantia: Non aurum in viridi queritis arbore. &c.

ALas, which folye, & whiche ignorauncē misledeth wandring wretches fro the pathe of very good. Certes ye seken no golde in grene trees, ne ye gadren not precious stones in hye mountayns to catchen fysshe: of the which ye may maken riche feestes.

And yf you lyke to hunte to Roes, ye ne go nat to the fordes of the water that hight Thyrene. And ouer this men knowe wel the crekes and the cauernes of ỹ see vhyd in the flodes, and knowen eke whyche water is moost plenteous of whyte perles, & knowen whiche water habounderh most of reed purpure, that is to sayne, of a maner shelfysh, with whiche men dyen purpure: and knowen whiche strondes habounden moste of tendre fysshes, or of sharpe fysshes, ỹ hight Echynes. But folke suffren hem strike to ben so blynde, that hem ne recchen not to know where thilke goodes be vhydde, whiche that they coueyten, but plungen hem in erthe, and seken there thilke good, that surmounteth the heuen that beareth the sterres. What prayer mayst I maken that be digne to the myce thoughtes of men? But I pray that they coueytē rychesse and honours, so that whā they haue gottē tho false goodes with great trauayle that therby they mowen knowen the very goodes.

Hactenus mendacis formā felicitatis ostē disse sufficerit, qō si perspicacitter intuearis, ordo est deinceps. &c.

IT suffyseth that I haue sayde hyderto, ỹ forme of false weie fulnesse: so that if ỹ loke nowe clercly: the order of myne entenciō requireth frō henceforth, to shewē the very weiefulnes. B. Forsoth (qō I) I se wel now, ỹ sufficiaunce may nat comen by richesse, ne power by realmes, ne reuerence by dignitees, ne gentyllesse by glory, ne ioye by delyces. P. And hast thou wel knowen the causes (qō she) why it is? B. Certes me semeth (qō I) that I se hem, right as though it were through a lyttel clyste: But me were leauer knowen hem more openly of the. Phi. Certes (qō she) the reason is al redy. For thylke thynge that symply is one thynge without any deuision, the errour and folye of mankynde denydeth and departeth it & misledeth it, and transporteth from very & parfyte good, to goodes that be false & vnparfyt. But say me this: weenest thou that he ỹ hathe nede of power, ỹ him ne lacketh nothynge? B. Nay (qō I) P. Certes (qō she) thou sayest arighte: for yf so be that there is a thynge that in any partie be feble of power, certes as in that it more nedes be nedy of forayn helpe. B. Right so it is (quod I) P. Sufficiaunce and power ben of one kynde. Boece. So semeth (quod I) Philosophie. And demest thou (quod she) that a thynge that is of thys maner, that is to saye, sufficiaunt and myghty, oughte ben dispysed, or elis that it be right digne of reuerēce aboue all thynges? Bo. Certes (qō I) it is no doute

that it is wyt worthy to be reuerenced. ℙ. Let vs adden (qꝺ̄ she) reuerence to sufficiaūce and to power, so that we demen ꝑ these thre thynges be al one thinge. B. Certes (qꝺ̄ I) let vs adden it if we wyl graunt the sothe. ℙ. What demest thou (qꝺ̄ she) thā is that a derke thing and not noble, that is sufficiaūt, reuerent, and mighty. or els that it is right noble and right clere by celebrare of renōme. Consyder than (qꝺ̄ she) as we haue graunted here byfore, that he that ne hath no nede of nothyng, and is most myghty and moste digne of honoure, yf him nedeth any clereneſſe of renōme, whyche clereneſſe he myght not graunten of him self: so for lacke of thylke clereneſſe he might semē the feblest on any syde, or the more out caſte. Gloſe. That is to say, naye: For who so that is ſufficiaunt, myghty, and reuerent, clereneſſe of renōme foloweth of the forſayde thynges: he hath it all redy of his ſufficiaunce. Boece. I maye not (quod I) denye it, but I more graunten as it is, that thys thinge is right re lebzable by clereneſſe of renōme and nobleſſe. ℙhi. Than foloweth (quod she) that we adden clereneſſe of renomme to the forſayde thynges, so that there be amonges hem no dyfference. Boece. This is a conſequence (qꝺ̄ I) ℙhilo. This thynge than (quod she) that ne hathe nede of no forayne thynge, and that maye do all thynge by hys ſtrengthes, and that is noble and honourable, is it not a mery thynge and ioyfull. Boece. But whence (quod I) that any ſorowe might come to this thyng that is ſuche, certes I maye not thynke ꝓhiloſo. Than mote we graunten (quod she) that thys thynge be full of gladneſſe, yf the forſayde thynges be ſothe. And certes, alſo mote we graunten, that ſufficiaunce, power, nobleſſe, reuerence, and gladneſſe be oneiye dyuers by names, but her ſubſtaunce hath no dyuerſyte. Boecius. Ye mote ne delye be ſo (quod I) ℙhiloſophia. Thylke thynge than (quod she) that is one and ſymple in hys nature, the wyckednesſe of men departeth and deuydeth it: And whan they enforcen hem to gettem parte of a thynge, that ne hathe no part, they ne getten hem neither thilke partie that nys none, ne the thynge all hole that they deſyre. Boece. In whyche manere (quod I) ℙhiloſophia. Thylke man (quod she) that ſecheth rycheſſe to flyen ponertye: he ne trauayleth him not for to get power, for he hath leuure be derde and vyle, and eke wythdraweth from hym ſelfe many natheell delytes, for he nolde leſe the money that he hath aſſembled. But certes in thys manet he ne getteth him no ſufficiaunce, that power forleteth and that moleſtie pycketh, and that fylthe maketh outcaſte, and that derkneſſe hydeth. And certes he that deſyreth only power, waſteth and ſcattereth rycheſſe, and diſpyſeth delyces and eke honour ꝑ is without power, ne he ne pur ſueth glozy nothing. Certes thou wel ſtreſt that many thinges faylen to him: For he hath ſomtyme defaute of many neceſſytees, and ma ny anguyſſhes byten him. And whan he may not don the defautes away, he forleteth to be mighty, and that is the thing that he moſt de ſyreth. And right thus may I make ſemblable reaſons of honour, of glozy, and of delyces. For ſo euery of theſe forſayde thinges is ꝑ ſame ꝑ theſe other thiges ben, that is to sayne, al one thing. Who ſo euer ſeketh to gete that one of theſe is not ꝑ other, he ne getteth not ꝑ he de ſyreth. B. What ſayeſt ꝑ thā, if that a man en neyre to gete al theſe thiges togider. ℙ. Certes (qꝺ̄ she) I wold ſay ꝑ he wold get hi ſouerayn bliſſfulnes, but ꝑ ſhal he not fynde in the thynges that I haue shewed, that mowe ne yene ꝑ they beheten. ℙ. Certes no (quod I) ℙhi. Than (quod she) ne ſhullen men not in no way ſeken bliſſfulneſſe in ſuche thynges as men wenen that they ne mowe gyuen but one thynge ſyngierly of all that men ſeken. Boece. I graūt wel (qꝺ̄ I) ne non forther thyng maye be ſayde. ℙhi. Nowe haſte thou than (qꝺ̄ she) the forme and the cauſe of falſe welefulneſſe. Now turne and flyte agayn to thy thought, for there ſhal thou ſene anon thylk very bliſſfulneſſe, ꝑ I haue bebyght the. Boece. Certes (quod I) it is clere and open, thoughe it were to a blynde man: And that shewdeſt thou me a lytel here beforne, whan thou enforcedeſt ꝑ to ſhew me ꝑ cauſes of the falſe welefulneſſe. For (but if I be begiled) than is ꝑ thylke very bliſſfulneſſe and parfyte, that parfyteiye maketh a man ſufficiaunt, myghtye, honourable, noble, and ful of gladnes. And for thou ſhalt wel know, that I haue wel vnderſtāden theſe thynges within my herte: I knowe well that thilke bliſſfulneſſe that men berryly peuen one of the forſayd thynges, ſens they ben all one: I knowe doutleſſe ꝑ thylke thynge is full of bliſſfulneſſe. ℙ. O my norice (qꝺ̄ she) by thyn opinion I ſay that thou arte bliſſfull, yf thou put this there that I ſhall ſayne. B. What is

that

that (quod I). P. Trowest thou that there be any thyng in this erthely mortall tombelynge erynges, that maye bryngen thys estate to Certes (qõ I) I trowe it not: and thou hastte wed me wel, that ouer thilke good ther nis nothyng more to ben desyred. P. These thynges than (qõ she, that is to sayne, erthly sufficiaunce & power, and such thinges erthly, they semen lykeneste of very good, or els it semeth that they yeuen to mortall folke a maner of goodnesse, that ne be not parfyte, but thilke good that is very and parfyte, that may they not yeuen. B. I accorde me well (qõ I). Phi. Than (qõ she) for as moch as thou hast knowen, which is thilk very blisfulnes, & eke whi the thilk thinges ben, ỹ ben falsely blisfulnesse, that is to say, that they by disceyte semẽ very goodes: Nowe behoueth the to knowe whẽce & where ỹ mowe seke thilke very blysfulnesse. B. Certes (quod I) ỹ desire I greatly, & haue abyden longe tyme to herken it. P. But for as moche (quod she) as it lyketh to my disceyple Plato in his boke of Thimeo, that in right lytel thynges men shulden beseche the helpe of god: what iudgest thou ỹ be nowe to done so that we may deserue to fynde ỹ seate of thilke soueryn goode. B. Certes (qõ I) I deme ỹ we shulen cleape to the father of all goddes, for wythouten him nys there nothyng founded aright. P. Thou saiest a ryght (qõ she) I began anon to synge right thus.

O qui perpetua mundũ ratione gubernas,
Terrarũ celiq; satoz, qui tempus ab euo, ire
Iubes, stabilisq; manens das cuncta moueri. Quem non externe pepulerunt fingere cause &c.

THou father, soueryne & creatoure of heuen and of erthes, ỹ gouernest this worlde by pardurable reason, that commaundest the tymes to gone, sythe ỹ age had begynning. Thou that dwellest thy selfe aye stedfast & stable, & yeuest al other thynges to be meued, ne foryeue causes ne cesseden the neuer to cõpoun werke of flatering mater, but onely the forme of soueryn good yset wythin the thout enuy, ỹ meued ỹ freely. Thou that art alderfayrest, bearynge the fayre worlde ỹ thy thought: formedest thys worlde to thy lykenesse semblable, of ỹ fayre world in thy thought. Thou drawest all thynge on thy soueryne ensampler, and cõmaundest that this world parfitely ymaked, haue freely and absolute his perfyte parties. Thou byndest the elementes by nombres proporcionables, that the colde thynges mowen accorden with the hote thinges, and the dry thiges with the moyste: That the fyre, that is purest, ne flye nat ouer hye, ne that the heuynesseye drawe nat adoun ouerlow the erthes that be plonged in the waters. Thou knyttest togyder, the meane soule of treble kynde mouyng al thynges, & deuydest it by mẽbres acording. And whan it is thus deuyded, it hath assembled a mouynge in to roundes, it gothe to turne agayne to him selfe, and enuyronneth a full depe thoughte, and turneth the heuen by semblable ymage. Thou by euen lyke causes enhaunsest the soules and the lesse lyues, and ablyng hem to height by lyght waines or cartes. Thou sowest hem in to heauen and in to erth, and whan they be cõuerted to the by thy benigne lawe, thou makest hem returne ayen to the by ayen leding fyre. O father yeue thou to ỹ thought to lyfte vp in to thy strayte sete, and graūt him to enuyronne the wel of good. And the lyght yfounde graunte him to fyxen the clere syghtes of his corage in the: and scatter thou and to breake ỹ weightes & the cloudes of erthely heuynesse, & shyne thou by thy brightnesse. For thou art clerenesse, thou arte pesyble reste to debonayre folke, thou thy self art beginnyng, bearer, leder, pathe, and terme to loke on the that is our ende.

Quoniã igitur, que sit imperfecti, que etiã perfecti boni forma didicisti, nunc demonstrandum reor &c.

FOr as moche thã, as thou hastte sene whiche is the fourme of good, that nys not parfite, and the forme of good, whiche that is parfyte. Nowe trowe I ỹ it were good to shewe in what this perfectiõ of blisfulnes is set. And in thys thyng I trowe ỹ we shall firste enquire for to wetten, if that any suche maner good as thilke good as thou hast dyfynished a litel here beforne, ỹ is to sayne, soueryne good, mave be foũd in ỹ nature of thiges. For ỹ vaine imaginacion of thought ne disceyue vs not, and ỹ

bē out of the sothfastnesse of thilke thing that is submytted to vs. But it may not be denyed that thilke ne is, and that is right as a wel of al goodes. For al thyng that is cleped imparfyte is proued imparfyte, by the amenusig of perfection of thing that is parfyte. And herof cometh it that in euery thynge general, if that men sene any thyng that is imparfyte, certes in thylke thynge generall, there mote be some thing that is parfyte. For if so be that perfection is don away, men may not thinke ne saye from whence thilke thig is, ꝑ is cleped imperfyte. For the nature ne toke not her beginning of thynges amenused and imparfyte, but it procedeth of thiges that bē al hole absolute, and discendeth so downe in to ꝑ vttrest thynges, and in to thynges empty & without frut. But as I haue shewed a lytell here before, that if that there be a blisfulnesse that be freel and vayne, and imparfite, there maye no man doubte that there nys some blysfulnesse, that there is sadde stedfaste and parfyte. B. This is concluded (qō I) fermely and sothfastlye. P. But consyder also (qō she) in whome thys blisfulnesse inhabyteth. The comune accorde and conteyte of ꝑ corage of men proueth and graunteth, that god prynce of all thynges is good. For so as nothing may be thought better thā good, it may not be douted thā ꝑ he that no thyng nys better than he nis good. Certes reason sheweth that god is so good, ꝑ it proueth by very force, ꝑ perfyte good is in hym. For if god nys such he ne maye not ben prince of al thing. For certes somthyng possessyng in it selfe parfyte good, shulde be more worthy than god: and it should semen that thilke thing were firste and older than god. For we haue shewed apperly, that al thinges that ben parfyte, ben firste, or thynges that ben imperfite. And for thy, for as moche as that my reason or my processe ne go not awaye wythoute an ende, we owen to graunten, that ꝑ souerayne good is right ful of souerayne parfyte good. And we haue establysshed, that the souerayne good is very blisfulnesse: than mote it nedes be, that very blysfulnesse is sette in souerayne good. B. Thys take I well (qō I) ne thys ne may not be with saide in no maner. P. But I praye the (qō she) se nowe howe thou maysle proven boldly, and withoutē corrupcion, thys that we haue sayd, that the souerayne god is full of ryghte souerayne good. B. In whiche maner (qō I) P. Weneſt thou aughte (qō she) that the father of al thynges hath taken this souerayne good any where oute of hym selfe. Of which souerayne good, men proueth that he is full. Righte as thou myghtest thynken, that god, that hathe blysfulnesse in hym selfe, and thylke blysfulnesse that is in hym were dyuers in substaunce. For if thou wene, that god hath receyued thilk good out of hym self, thou mayste wene, that he haue thilke good to god be more worthy than God. But I am beknowe and cōfesse, and that righte dignely, that god is right worthy aboue all thynges: And yf so be that thys good be in hym by nature, but that is dyuers from him by wening reason, sens we speken of god prince of al thiges. Fayne who so fayne maye, who was he that conioyned these thynges togyther. And eke at the laste se wel, that ꝑ thyng that is dyuers fro any thyng, that thylke thing nys not that same thynge, for whyche it is vnderstonden to ben dyuers. Thā folowerh it wel, that thilke thing that by his nature is diuers from souerayne good, that thynge is not souerayne good. But certes it were a felonous cursydnesse to thynken that of hym that nothynge nys more worthe. For alway of al thynges the name of hem ne may not bene better then her begynner. For whyche I maye conclude by right very reason, that thylke that is begynnyng of all thynges, thilke same thynge is souerayn god in his substance. B. Thou haste sayde ryghtfully (quod I) Philoso. But we haue graunted (quod she) that the souerayne good is blysfulnesse. Boece. That is sothe (qō I) Philoso. Than (quod she) we moten nedes granten and confessen that thilke same souerayne good be god. Boece. Certes (qō I) I ne maye not denye ne wythstande the reasons purposed, and I se wel that it folowerh by strength of the premisses. Phi. Loke nowe (quod she) if this be proued yet more fermely thus, that there ne mowen not bene to souerayne goodes that bene dyuers amonge hem selfe. For certes the goodes that ben dyuers amonge hem selfe, that one is not that the other is. Than ne mowen neyther of hem be parfyte, so as either of hem lacketh to other, but that that nys not parfyte, men maye sene apertly that it nys not souerayne. The thynges than that be souerainly good, ne mowen by no waye be dyuers. But I haue well concluded, that blysfulnesse and god bene the souerayne good, for whiche it mote nedes bene

that

that souerayne blysfulnesse is souerayne dignyte. Boece. Nothynge (qd I) is more soothefaste than this, ne more ferme by reason, ne a more worthy thynge than God maye not be concluded. Philosophye. Upon these thynges than (quod she) right as these gromeetricions whan they haue shewed their propositions, ben wonte to bringen in thynges ỳ they clepen portismes or declaracyons of forsayde thynges, right so will I yeue the here as a corallarye or a mede of Crowne. For why, for as muche as by the gettyng of blisfulnesse men bene maked blysfull, and blysfulnesse is dignite. Than it is manyfest and open, that by the gettynge of dygnite men bene maked blysfull, right as by the gettynge of iustyce. And by the gettynge of sapyence they be maked wise, right so nedes by the semblable reason, whan they haue gotten dyuynite they be made goddes. Than is euery blysfull man a god. But certes by nature there nys but one god, but by the participacion of the diuynite there ne letteth ne dystourbeth nothynge, that there ne be many goddes. Boece. Thys is (quod I) a fayre thyng and a precyous, clepe it as thou wylt, be it Corallarye or portisme, or mede of crowne, or declarynge. Philoso. Certes (quod she) nothynge nys fayrer than is the thynge that by reason shulde be added to these forsayde thinges. Boece. What thing (quod I) Philosophie. So (quod she) as it semeth that blysfulnesse cõtayneth many thynges, it were for to weten whether ỳ all these thynges maken or conioynen as a maner bodye of blysfulnesse, by the dyuersyte of parties of membres, or els yf any of all these thinges be suche that it accomplysshe by hun selfe the substaunce of blysfulnesse. So al these other thynges ben referred and brought to blisfulnesse, that is to say, as to the chefe of hem.

Boecius. I would (quod I) that thou madest me clerely to vnderstande what thou sayest, and what thou recordest me the forsayd thinges. Philosophia. Haue I nat iudged (qd she) that blysfulnesse is good. Boece. Yes forsoth (quod I) and that souerayne good. Philoso. Adde than (quod she) thylke good ỳ is made blysfulnesse to all the forsayde thynges. For thylke same blysfulnesse, that is demed to be souerayne suffysaunce, thylke selfe is souerayne power, souerayne reuerence, souerayne clerenesse or noblesse, and souerayne delyte. What sayest thou than of all these thynges, that is to saye suffysaunce, power, and these other thynges. Ben they than as membres of blysfulnesse, or ben they referred and brought to souerayne good, right as all thynges that ben brought to the chefe of hem. Boece. I vnderstonde wel (quod I) what thou purposest to seke: but I desyre for to herken, that thou shewe it to me. Phi. Take nowe thus the dyscrecyon of this question (quod she) Yf al these thinges (quod she) weren membres to felycite, than wer ỳ they diuers that one from that other: and suche is the nature of parties or of membres, that dyuers membres compownen a body. Boece. Certes (quod I) it hath well ben shewed here byfore, that all these thynges ben al one thyng. Philo. Than bene they no membres, quod she. For els it shulde seme that blysfulnesse were cõioyned all of o membre alone, but that is a thynge that maye not be done. Boece. Thys thyng, quod I thã, nys not doutous, but I abide to herken the remenannt of thy question. Philoso. This is open and clere, quod she, that al other thynges ben referred and brought to good. For therfore is suffisãce required, for it is demed to be good: and for thy is power required, for mẽ trowen also that it be good. And thys same thynge mowen we thynken of coniecten of reuerence, of noblesse, and of delyte. Than is souerayne good the sõne and the cause of all that ought to ben desyred. For why thilke thynge that vnholdeth no good in it selfe, ne semblaunce of good, ne may nat well in no maner be desyred ne requyred. And the cõtrary: For though that thynges by her nature ne bene not good, algates yf men wenen that they ben good, yet ben they desyred as though they were verily good. And therfore it is sayd that men ought to wene by right, that bounty be the souerain fyne and the cause of all the thinges that ben to requirẽ. But certes thilke that is cause for which men requiren any thing, it semeth that thilke same thing be most desyred, as thus: If that a wight wold riden for cause of heale, he ne desyreth not so moche the mouyng to ridẽ as the effecte of hys heale. Nowe than sens that al thynges ben required for the grace of good, they ne ben not desyred of al folke more than the same good. But we haue graunted that blysfulnes is that same thynge, for why-che that all these other thynges ben desyred. Than is it thus, that certes only blysfulnesse is required and desyred. By whyche thyng it

sheweth clerely, that of good and blysfulnesse is al one and the same substaunce.

Boece. I se not (quod I) wherefore that men myght dispeyren in this. Philosoph. And we haue shewed, that god and verye blysfulnesse is all one thing. Boece. That is soth (quod I) Philoso. Than mowe we conclude sykerly, that the substaunce of God is sette in thylke same good, and in none other place.

Hue omnes pariter venite capti, Quos fallax ligat ignobis catenis, Terrenas habitãs libido mentes. Hic erit vobis requies laborum &c.

COmeth al togyther nowe ye þ bene ycaught & bounde with wicked chaynes, by the deceyuable delyte of erthly thinges inhabyting in your thought. Here shal be the reste of youre labour: here is the hauen stable in quiete pesyble. This alone is the open refute to wretches, that is to sayne, that ye that be combred & disceyued with worldely affections, cometh now to this souerayn good, þ is god, that is refute to hem that wyllen comen to hym. Al þ thinges þ the ryuer Tagus yeueth you wyth his golden grauels, Or elis al þ thynges þ the ryuer Hermus yeueth with his reed vryne: or that Indus yeueth, that is nexte the hote parye of the worlde, that medleth the grene stones wyth the whyte: ne shoulde not cleren the lokynge of youre thoughte, but hyden rather your blynde corage within her derkenesse Al that lyketh you here and excyteth and moueth your thoughtes, the erthe hath nouryshed it within hys lowe caues. But the shynynge, by whiche the heuen is gouerned, and whence that his strength, that eschaweth the derke ouerthrowyng of the soule, and who so euer maye knowen thilke lyght of blysfulnes, he wyll sayne, that the whyte beames of the Sunne ne be not clere.

Assentior (inquã) eiecta enim ferme nera rationibus constant. Tum illa, quãti, inquit, tu estimabis, si bonum ipsum, quid sit, agnoueris &c.

BOece. I assent me (quod I) for all thynges ben strongly bounden with right ferme reasons. Philoso. Howe moche wylte þ prayseu it (qõ she) if that thou knowe what thylke good is? Boece. I wol prayse it (qõ I) by price wonderende, if it shal betyde me to knowe also togyther god that is good. Philoso. Certes (quod she) that shal I do the by very reason, yf þ the thynges, þ I haue concluded a lytell here beforne, dwellen onely in her graunteyng. Boece. They dwellen graunted to the (qõ I) that is to sayne, as who sayth, I graunte to thy forsayd conclusyons. Philo. I haue shewed the (qõ she) þ the thinges, þ ben required of many folke, ne ben not very goodes ne parfyte. For they ben dyuers that one from that other. And so as eche of hem is lackynge to other, they ne haue no power to bringe a good, that is full and absolute. But than at erste bene they very good, whan they ben gathered togider al in to one forme, & in to one werkyng: so that thilke thynge that is suffysaunte, thylke same is power, and reuerence, noblesse, and myrthe. And forsothe but if al these thynges be al one same thynge, they ne haue not wherby that they mowe be put in the nombre of thynges that ought to be required & desyred. Boece. It is shewed (quod I) ne herof may there no man douten. Phi. The thinges than (quod she) that ne ben no goodes, whan they ben diuers, and whan they begynnen to be all one thyng, than ben they goodes, ne cometh it not than by the gettynge of vnite, that they be maked goodes. Boece. So semeth it (quod I) Phi. but al thynge that is good (quod she) graunteste thou that it be good by the participacion of good or no. Boece. I graunt it (quod I) Philoso. Than muste thou graunted (qõ she) by semblable reason that one and good be one same thyng. For of thynges, of whiche the effecte nys not naturelly dyuers, nedes her substaunce must be one same thyng. Boece. I ne maye not denye it (quod I) Philo. Hast thou not knowen wel (quod she) that al thyng that is, hath so longe hys dwellynge and hys substaunce, as longe as it is one, but whan it forletteth to ben one, it must nedes dyen and corrumpen togyder. B. In whych maner (qõ I) Philoso. Right as in beestes (quod she) whan the soule and the body ben conioyned in one, and

and dwellen togethet, it is cleped a beest: and whan her vnite is distroyed, by thy discreuemence of that one from that other, than sheweth it wel that it is a deed thynge, and it is no lenger no beest. And the body of a wyght whyle it dwelleth in one fourme by coniunction of membres, it is wel sene that it is a figure of mankynde: And yf the parties of the body be deuyded and discouered the at one frō that other, that they distroye the vnite, the bodye forleeseth to be, that it was before. And who so wolde renne in the same maner by all thynges, he shulde sene that without doute euery thynge is in his substaunce, as longe as it is one. And whan it forleeseth to be one, it dyeth and perysheth. Boece. Whan I consyder (quod I) many thynges, I se none other. Philoso. Is there any thynge (quod she) that in as muche as it lyueth naturelly, that forleeseth the talente or the appetyte of hys being, and desireth to come to dethe and to corruption? Boece. If I consider (quod I) the beestes that haue any maner nature of wyllynge and of nyllynge, I ne fynde no beest, but yf it be constrayned fro without forthe, that forleeseth or dispiseth the entencion to lyuen and to duren, or that wyl hys thankes hasten him to dyen. For euery beest trauayleth hym to defende and kepe the saluacion of hys lyfe, and eschweth dethe and distruccion. But certes I doute me of herbes and trees, that ne haue no feynge soules, ne no naturel worckynges, seruyng to appetytes, as beestes haue: whether they haue appetite to dwellen, and to duren. Philoso. Certes (quod she) therof dare she not doute. Now loke vpon the herbes and trees, for they wexen fyrst in suche places as ben conuenable to hem: in whiche places they mowe not dyen ne dryen, as longe as her nature maye defende hem. For some of hem wexen in feldes, and some wexen in mountaynes, and other wexe in mareys, and other cleauen on rockes, and some wexen plentrous in sondes. And yf any wyght enforce hym to beare hem in to other places, they wexen drie. For nature yeueth to euery thyng that is conuenyente to hym, and trauayleth that they ne dye, as longe as they haue power to dwellen and to lyuen. What wyte thou sayne of thys, that they drawen all her nourythynges by her rootes, ryght as they hadden her mouthes yploūged within the erthes, and sheaden by her mareys her woode and her barke? And what wyte thou sayne of thys, that thylke thynge that is right soft, as the marye is, that is alwaye hydde in the frete al within, and that is defended from withoute by the stedfastnesse of woode, and that the vttereste barkes is put ayenst the distemperaunce of the heauen, as a defendoure, myghtye to suffren harme? And thus certes mayste thou wel sene, howe great is the deligence of nature: For all thynges renoueien and publythen hem with sted ymultyplyed. Ne there nys no man, that ne wote well that they ne ben ryght as a foundemente and defyee, for to duren not onely for a tyme, but ryght as for to dure perdurably by generacion. And the thynges eke, that men wenen ne haue no soules, ne desyre they not by semblable reason to kepen that is his, that is to sain, that is accordynge to her nature in conseruacyon of her beynge and endurynge. For wherfore els beareth lyghtnesse the flambes vp, and the weyght pryesseth the erthe adown, but for as muche as thylke places and thilke mouynges be conuenable to eurrychе of hem. And forsothe euery thyng keepeth thylke, that is accordynge and proper to hym, ryght as thynges that ben contrarious and enemyes corrumpen hem. And yet ꝑ harde thinges (as stones) cleauen and holden her partyes togyther ryght faste and harde, and defenden hem in withstāding, that they ne departen lightly, and yeuen place to hem, that breaken or deuyden hem: but natheleste they retournen ayen soone in to the same thynges, frome whence they be araced. But fyre fleeth and refuseth al deuysyon. Ne I ne treate not nowe here of wylful mouynges of the soule that is knowyng, but of naturell entencyon of thynges, as thus: Ryght as we swalowen the meate that we receyuen, and ne thynke not on it, and as we drawe our brethe in slepynge, that we wete not whyle we slepe. For certes in the beestes the loue of her lyuynges ne of her beynges, ne cometh not of the wyllynges of the soule, but of the begynnynges of nature. For certes thorough constraynynge causes wyll desyreth & embraceth ful oft tymes the deth, that nature dredeth, that is to sayn, as thus: That a man may be constrayned so by some cause, that hys wyll desyreth and taketh the deth, whiche that nature hateth and dredeth ful sore. And somtyme we sene the contrarye, as thus: that the wyll of a wyght disturbeth

and constrayneth that, that nature alwaye desireth and requireth, that is to say the werkes of generacion, by the whiche generacion onely dwelleth and is sustayned the longe duration of mortall thynges, as thus. Thys charite and thys loue that euery thynge hath to hym selfe, ne cometh not of the mouyng of the soule, but of the entencion of nature. For the pourueyaūce of God hath yeuen to thinges, that ben create of hym this, that is a full great cause to lyuen and to duren, for whiche they desiren naturelly her lyfe, as longe as euer they mowen: for whiche thou mayste not dreden by no maner, that al thynges that ben any where, that they ne requiren naturelliye the ferme stablenesse of perdurable dwelling, and eke the eschewynge of distruccion.

Boece. I confesse (quod I) that I se well no we, & certainly without doute, þ thynges that a while ago semeden vncertayne to me. Philoso. But (quod she) thylke thynge that desireth to be and dwel parduablye, he desireth to ben one: for if that one were distroied, certes beyng shulde there none dwellen to no wyght. Boece. That is sothe (quod I). Philo. Than (quod she) desiren al thynges one.

Boece. I assent (quod I) Philo. And I haue shewed (qō she) that yike same one is, thylke that is good. Bo. Ye forsoth (qō I) Philo. All thynges than (quod she) requiren good, and thylke mayste thou diseryuen thus: Good is thylke thing that euery wyght desireth. Bo. Ther ne may be thought no more very thing (qō I) for eyther al thynges be referred and brought to nought, & rotten without gouernour dispoyled of one, as of her proper heed, or els yf there beany thyng, to whiche that al thynges tenden and byen to, that thing must be the sourrayne good of al goodes. Philoso. Than sayd she thus: O my norryce (quod she) I haue great gladnesse of the, for thou hast fyxed in thy herte the myddle sothefastnesse, that is to sayn the pryncke, but this thing hath be discouered to the, in that thou saydest, that thou wilest not a lytel here before. Boece. What is that (quod I). Philo. That thou ne wyltest not (quod she) whiche was thende of thynges, & certes that is þ thynge that euery wyght desyreth. And for as moche as we haue gathered & comprehended, that good is thylke thyng that is desired of all, than mote we nedes confesse, that good is the fyne of all thynges.

Quisquis profunda mente despiciat deū, Cupitq; nullis ille deuiis falli, In se reuol-tum intimi lucem visus &c.

Who so seketh sothe by a depe thought, & coueiteth to be deceyued by no miswayes, let him rollen & treate within himself, þ light of his inwarde sight: & let him gatheren ayen, enclininge in to a cōpace þ longe mouinges of his thoughtes. And let him tracke his corage, that he hath enclosed & hydde in his treasours, all that he hath cōpassed or sought fro without. And thanthylke thynge that the blacke clowdes of errour whilom had couered, shal light more clereliye than Phebus hym selfe ne lyghteth. Philo. Who so woll seke the depe groundes of sothe in hys thought, and woll nat be disceyued by false proposicyons, that gone amysse from the trouthe, let him well examine and rolle within hym selfe, the nature & proprietes of the thynge. And let him yet eftsones examine & rollen hys thoughtes by good deliberacion, or that he deme. And lette hym tracken his soule, that it hath by naturel principles kyndliche yhydde, within it selfe, al the trouthe, the whiche he imagyneth to ben in thynges without: and than al the derknesse of his misknowing, shal seme more euidently to the sight of his vnderstādyng, than the sonne ne semeth to the sight without forthe. For certes the bodye bryngyng the weyght of forgetyng, ne hath not chased out of your thought all the clernesse of youre knowyng, for certainly, the seede of sothe holdeth and cleueth wythin your corage, and it is awaked and excyted by þ wyndes and by the blastes of doctrine. For wherfore els demen ye of your owne wyl the ryghtes when ye be asked, but yf so were that the norysshing of reason ne lyued, yplunged in the depe of your herte, that is to sayne, how we shulde men demen the sothe of any thynge that were asked, and yf there were a rote of sothfastnesse, that were yplunged and hyd in naturel principles, the whych sothfastnesse lyued wythin þ depenesse of the thought. And yf so be, that the muse and the doctrine of Plato syngeth sorth, al that euery wight lerneth, he ne dothe nothyng els than, but recordeth, as men recorden thynges that ben forgeten.

That

Tum ego, Platoni (inquam) vehementer assentior. Nam me horum iam secundo commemoras. Primum quod memoriam corpora contagione. &c.

Whan sayde I thus. I accorde me gretly to Plato, for thou recordest and remembrest me these thynges yet the seconde tyme, that it to say, fyrste whan I lefte my memorye by the contrayous conjunctyon of the bodye wyth the soule: And eftsoones afterwarde, whan I wiste it confounded, by thy charge and by the burden of my sorowe, & than sayde the thus.

If thou loke (quod she) fyrste the thynges that thou haste graunted, it ne shall not been right ferre, that thou ne shalt remembren the yke thynge, that thou saydest that thou nystest not. B. What th[illegible]e (qõ I) P. By whiche gouernement (qõ she) that this worlde is gouerned. B. I remembre it well (qõ I) and I confesse wel, that I ne wyst it naught. But al be it so, that I se nowe from a ferre, what thou purposeste, algates I desyre yet to herken it of the more playnely. P. Thou ne wendest nat (qõ she) a lytel here before, that men shulde dout, that this worlde is gouerned by god. B. Certes (qõ I) ne yet, ne dout I it not ne I nyl neuer wene that it were to doute, as who sayth, but I wot wel ꝑ god gouerneth thys worlde. And I shal answeren by what reasons I am brought to thys. Thys worlde (qõ I) of so manye dyuers and contrayous parties, ne myght neuer haue ben assembled in o forme, but yf there were one, that conioyned so manye dyuers thynges. And the same diuersyte of her natures ꝑ so discorden, that one fro that other muste departen, and vnioynen the thynges that ben conioyned, yf there ne were one that conteyned, that he hath conioyned and ybounde. Ne the certayne order of nature ne shulde nat bryng forth so ordeyne mouynges, by places, by tymes, by doynges, by spaces, by qualytyes, if there ne were one that were aye stedfast dwellyng, that ordayned and disposed these diuersytes of mouynges. And thylke thinge what so euer it be, by whyche that al thynges be ymaked & lad, I clepe hym god, that is a worde that is vsed to all folkes. Philo. Than sayed she: Sythe thou frieste thus these thynges, I trowe that I haue lytel more to done, that thou mighty of welfulnes, hole and sounde, ne se eft somes thy countre. But let vs loken these thinges ꝑ we haue purposed here before. Haue I not nombred & sayde (qõ she) that sufficiaunce is in blysfulnesse. And we haue accorded ꝑ god is thylke same blisfulnesse. B. Yes forsoth (qõ I). P. And ꝑ to gouerne this worlde (qõ she) ne shall he neuer haue nede of none helpe fro without. For els yf he had nede of anye helpe, he ne shulde not haue no ful sufficiaunce. B. Yes thus it mote nedes be (qõ I) P. Thã ordeyned he by hym selfe alone all thynges (qõ she) B. That maye not be denyed (qõ I). P. And I haue shewed that god is ꝑ same good. B. It remembreth me well (qõ I). P. Than ordeyneth he al thinges by thylk good (quod she) sith he which we han accorded to be good gouerneth al thynges by hym selfe. And he is a key and a steyre, by which the edifice of this worlde is kept stable & without corrũpyng. B. I accorde me greatlye (qõ I). And I haue apperceyued a lytel here before, ꝑ thou woldest saye thus. Al were it so, that it were by a thynne suspeciõ. P. I trowe wel (quod she) for as I trowe, thou ledest nowe more entẽtyfly thyn eye, to loken the very goodes. But natheless, the thinge that I shal tel the, yet ne sheweth not lasse to token. B. What is ꝑ (qõ I) P. So as men trowe (qõ she) & that rightfully, ꝑ god gouerneth al thynges by the key of hys goodnesse. And all these same thynges that I haue taught the hasten hem by naturell entencyon to come to good, there maye no man doubten that they ne ben gouerned voluntarely. And that they ne conuerten hem of her owne good wil to her ordeynour. As that they ben accordyng and enclinyng to her gouernour and to her kynge. B. It mote nedes be so (qõ I) for the realme ne shulde not seme blysful, yf there were a route of misrawynges in dyuers parties, ne the sauynge of obeyent thiges, ne shuld not be then. P. Is ther nothyng (qõ she) that kepeth hys nature, that enforceth hym to gone ayenst god. B. No (qõ I) P. And if ꝑ any thyng enforced hym to wstande god, might it auayen at last ayen hym that we haue graũted to be al myghty by the ryght of blysfulnes. B. Certes (qõ I) all vterly it ne myght not auayle hym. P. Then is there nothyng (quod she) that eyther maye or wyll withstande to hys soueravne god. B. I trowe not (qõ I) P. Than (qõ she) is thylke the souerayn god, that al thynges gouerneth strongely, and ordeyneth hem softly. Forte. Than sayd I thus, I delyte me (quod I) noe

onelye

only in thendes or the summe of ꝑ reasons ꝑ thou haste concluded and ꝓued, but thylke wordes that thou vsest, deiyē me moch more, so that at laste fooles, that somtyme renden great thynges, oughten ben ashamed of hem selfe, that is to sayn, that we fooles that reprehenden wickedly the thinges that touchen goddes gouernaunce, we oughten ben ashamed of oure selfe. As I, that sayde that god refuseth onely the werkes of men, and ne entermeteth not of it. ꝑhilo. Thou haste wel herde (qꝺ the) the fables of the poetes, howe the graunies assayeden heuen, with the goddes: but forsothe the debonayre force of god disposed hem as it was worthy, ꝑ is to sayn, distroyed ꝑ graunes as it was worthy. But wylte thou that we reioynen togyther thilke same reasons. For peraventure of suche coniunctiōs may sterten vp some fayre sparke of sothe. Boece. Do (qꝺ I) as the lyste ꝑhiloso. Arrestest thou (qꝺ the) ꝑ god ne be almyghtye. B. No man is in doute of it certes (qꝺ I) ꝑ. No wight ne douteth it, if he be in hys minde (quod the). But he that is almighty, ther nis nothynge that he ne may. Boe. That is sothe (qꝺ I) ꝑhi. May god do yuel (qꝺ the). Boe. Nay forsothe (qꝺ I). ꝑhiloso. Than is yuell nothyng (qꝺ the) syth that he maye don none yuel, that may done al thynges. Boece. Scornest thou me (qꝺ I) or els playest thou, or disceyuest thou me, that haste so women with thy reasons, the house of Dedalus so enterlasyng that it is vnable to be vnlaced, ꝑ thou otherwhile entrest ther thou issuest, and otherwhile issuest there thou entrest. Ne foldest thou not togither by replicacion of wordes a maner wonderfull cercle or enuyronnyng of the simplicite dyuine. For certes a lytell here beforn whan thou began at blisfulnesse, thou saydest that it is souerain good, and that god is the blysfulnesse, for whiche thou yaue me as a conuenable yefte, that is to sayne, that no wyght nys blisful, but if he be god also therwith. And saidest eke, that ꝑ forme of good is the substaunce of god and of blysfulnesse. And saydest ꝑ thilke one is thilke same good, that is required and desired of al the kinde of thynges. And thou prouedest in disputynge, that god gouerneth al ꝑ thiges of the world, by the gouernaunce of bountie: And saydest that al thynges wolde obeyen to him, and saydest that the nature of yuel is nothynge. And these thynges shewdest thou not with no reasons taken fro without, but by proues in certies and homlich knowyng. The whiche proues drawen to hem selfe her faith and her accorde euerich of hem of other. Phi. Than saide she thus: I ne scorne not, ne playe, ne disceyue the: but I haue shewed the thing that is greatest ouer all thynges, by the yefte of god, that we whilom prayden. For this is the fourme of diuine substaunce, that is suche, that it ne flyeth not in to betereste forayne thynges, ne receyueth no straunge thynges in hym. But right as Permenides sayde in greke, of thylke dyuine substaunce: he sayd thus, that thylke diuine substaunce tourneth the world and the mouable cercle of thynges, whyle the like diuine substaunce kepeth it selfe without mouynges, that is to sayne, that he moueth neuer mo, and yet it moueth al other thinges. But natheless, if I haue fyxed reasons that be not taken fro without the compace of the thinge, of the whiche we treaten, but reasons that ben bestowed within compace: there nis not why thou shuldest merueyien, sythe thou haste lerned by the sentence of Plato, that wordes the wordes moste ben cosyns to the thynges, of whiche they speken.

Felix qui potuit boni, fontem visere lucidū.
Felix qui potuit grauis. &c.

BLissed is that man that may se the clere welle of good: Blysful is he that may bobynde him from the boundes of bery erthe: The poete of Thrace Orpheus, that whilom had right great sorowe, for the deth of hys wyfe. After that he had maked a complaynte by his wepely sōges, the wodes moue, the stones to reme, and had maked the ryuers to stonden styll, and had maked the hartes and hyndes to ioynen hir dieste her sydes to cruell lyons, to berken hys songe, and had maked ꝑ the hare was not agast of the hounde, which was pleased by songe: So whan the moste ardaunt loue of hys wyfe, brende the entrayles of hys breste, ne the songes that hadde ouercomen all thynges, ne mygliten not aswagen her lorde Orpheus. He playned hym of the heuen goddes, whiche that were cruel to hym, he wente hym to the houses of the hell: And he tempered hys blandishynge songes, by resounyng of strynges, and spake

and

and songe in weppinge, al that euer he had re-
ceyued and laued out of the noble welles of
hys mother Caliope the goddesse. And he
song with as muche as he myght of weppyng
and with as muche as loue, that doubled his
swetnesse myght yeuen hym and teache hym, &
clamoured the hell, & required and besoughte
by swete prayer, the lordes of soules in hel of
mercy nge, that is to saye, to yelden hym hys
wyfe. Cerberus the porter of hell, with hys
thre hedes was caught, and all abasshed of
the newe songe. And the thre goddesses. Fu-
ryes and vengeresses of felonyes, that tour-
menten and agaste þ soules, by anoye woren
sprouful and sory, and teres wepten for pite.
The was not the heed of Ixion tourmented,
ne the ouerthrowynge whele. And Tanta-
lus, that was distroyed by the woodenesse of
longe thruste, dispised the floodes to drynke.
The foule that hyght Vultour, that eateth þ
stomake of the fyssen of Tytius is so fulfyl-
led of hys songe, that it nyl eaten ne tyren no
more. At the laste the lorde and inge of soules
was moued to mysericordyes, and cryed: we
ben ouercomen (quod he) yeue we to Orphe-
us hys wyfe to beare hym companye, he hath
well ybought her by hys songes and hys dy-
tes: but we wyll putten a lawe in thys, and
covenant in the yefte, that is to saynę, that tyl
he be out of hel, yf he loke behynde hym, that
hys wyfe shall come agayne vnto vs. But
what is he that maye yeue a lawe to louers-
lone is a greater lawe and a stronger to him
self than any lawe that men maye yeuen.
Alas, when Orpheus and his wyfe were al-
moste at the termes of the nyght, that is to
saynę, at the laste boundes of hell, Orpheus
loked backwarde on Euridice hys wyfe, and
lost her, as was deed. Thys fable apertayneth
to you all, who so euer desyreth or seketh to
lede his thought in to þ souerayn day, that is
to saye, to clerenesse of souerayne good. For
who so euer be so ouercomen that he fyxe his
eyen in to the pytte of hell, that is to saynę:
who so euer set hys thoughtes in erthly thin-
ges, al that euer he hath drawen of the noble
good celestyal, he leseth it, whan he loketh to
the helles, this is to saynę, into lowe thynges
of the erthe.

¶ Thus endeth the thyrde boke
of Boece, and here after fo-
loweth the fourthe.

HEc cum philosophia dignitate vultus, et
oris grauitate seruata, leniter, suauiterq;
cecinisset, Tum ego non dum penitus insti-
merozis oblitus. &c.

WHan Philosophie had songen
softly & delectably the forsaid
thinges, keping the dignite of
her chere, and the weyght of
her wordes. I than that ne
had all vtterlye forzeten the
weppynge and the mournynge that was sette
in myn herte, forbrake the entencyon of her,
that entended yet to sain some other thinges.
O (quod I) thou that arte gyderesse of ve-
ry lyght, the thynges that thou haste sayde
me hytherto, ben to me so clere and shewynge
by the deuine lokyng of hem, and by thy rea-
sons, that they ne mowen ben ouercomen.
And thylke thynges, that thou toldest me, all
be it so that I had whylom forzeten hem, for
the sorow of the wronge that hath be done to
me: yet neuertheleste they ne were not vtterly
vnknowen to me. But thys same is name-
ly a ryght great cause of my sorowe, so that
as the gouernour of thynges is good, yf that
yuels mowen ben by any wayes: or els if that
yuels passen without punyshynge, the whi-
che thyng only, how worthy is it to ben won-
dred vpon. Thou considrest it well thy selfe
certaynly. But yet to thys thyng there is yet
another thinge ioyned more to be wondred
vpon For felonye is Empereste, and floureth
full of rychesses, and vertue nys not all on-
lye without meedes, but it is caste downe,
and ete forstroden vnder the fete of felonous
folke: and it abyeth the turmentes in stede
of wicked felons. Of al whiche thinges there
is no wight may marvaylen ynough ne com-
playnen, that suche thynges be doone in the
reigne of god, that all thynges wote, and al
thynges maye, and ne wyl not only but good
thynges. Than sayde she thus: Certes (quod
she) that were a great marvayle, and an a-
bashyng without ende, and well more horri-
ble than all the monsters, yf it were as thou
wenest, that is to saynę, that in the ryght or-
dayne house of so moche a father and an or-
daynour of meyne, that the vesselles that ben
foule and vyle, shulde ben honoured and he-
syed, & þ precious vesselis that shulde ben de-
fouled

fouled and vyle. But it is not so, for yf the thinges, that I haue cõcluded a litel here before, ben kept hole and vnbraced, thou shalt wel know by ỹ auctorite of god, (of ỹ whose reigne I speke) that certes the good folke be alway myghtie, and thewes ben alway outcaste and feble. Ne the vyces be neuermore without payn, ne the vertues ne be not without mede. And that blisfulnesse cometh alway to good folke, and infortune cometh alwaye to wicked folke. And thou shalt wel knowen many thynges of thys kynde, that shulde ceasen thy playntes, & strengthen the with stedfaste sadnesse. And for thou haste sene the fourme of verye blysfulnesse by me that haue whilom shewed it the, and thou hast knowen in whom blysfulnesse is sette: al thynge treated, that I trowe be necessary to put forthe, I shal shewen the the way, that shal bryngen the ayen vnto thyn house: and I shal fyxe fethers in thy thought, by whiche it may arisen in heyght, so that al tribulacion ỹdone away, thou by my gydyng and by my pathe, and by my stedes, shalte mowen retourne hole and sounde in to thy countrye.

Sunt enim pennæ volucres mihi, Quæ celsa conscendunt poli, Quas sibi cum velox mens induit. &c.

Than for thy swyfte fethers ỹ fourmounten the height of the heuen, whan ỹ swyft thought hath clothed it i tho fathers, it dyspyseth ỹ hateful erthes, & surmoũteth the roundenesse of the great ayre, & it seeth ỹ cloudes behinde hys backe, & passeth the heyght of the region of the fyre, that enchaufeth by the swyft mouynge of the fyrmament, tyll ỹ he aryseth in to the houses, that beaten the sterres, and ioyneth the way with the sonne ỹphebus, & felaushyppeth the waye of the olde colde Saturnus, & be ymaked a knyght of the clere sterre, that is to sayne, whan the thought is made goddes knyght, by the seking of clere trouth to comen to the very knowlege of god. And thilke soule reneth by the crokle of sterres, in al the places there as the shynynge myght is ypayned, that is to sayne, the myght that is cloudieste. For on myghtes that be cloudieste it semeth that the heuen were payned with dyuers ymages of sterres. And whan he hath done there ynoughe, he shal forleten the laste heuen, and he shal pieten and wenden on the backe of the swyfte fyrmamente, and he shal be maked partyte of the worthypful lyght of god. There holdeth the lorde of thynges the ceptre of hys myght, and attempreth the gouernementes of the worlde, and the chaunge of thynges, stable in hym selfe, gouerneth the swyfte carte or wayne, that is to sayne, the cirruler mouynge of the sonne. And yf thy way ledeth the ayen, so that thou be brought thyder, than wyl thou saye, that is the countrye that thou requirest, of whiche thoune haddest no mynde: but nowe it remembreth me wel, here was I borne, here wol I fasten my degre, here woll I dwell. But yf thou list than to loken on the lerdnesses of the erthe, that thou haste forleten, than shalt thou sene, that these felonous tyrannes, that the wretched people dredeth nowe, shullen be exyled from thylke fayre countrye.

Tum ego pape inquã, de magna promittis. Nec dubito, quin possis efficere: tu modo qui exitaueris, ne moreris &c.

Than sayd I thus. O I wonder me ỹ thou behetest me so great thynges. Ne I ne dout not that thoune mayste well performe that thou behetest: But I praye the thys that thou ne tarye not, to tel me thylke thynges, that thou haste moued. Philoso. Fyrste (quod she) thou muste nedes knowe, that good folke ben alwaye stronge and myghtye, and the shrewes ben feble and deserte, and naked of al strengthes. And of these thynges certes euereych of hem is declared and shewed by other. For as good and yuell ben two contraryes, yf ỹ be that good be stedfaste, than sheweth the feblesse al openly. And yf thou know clerely the freelnesse of yuell, the stedfastnesse of good is knowen. But for as muche as the faythe of my sentence shall be the more ferme and habonndant, I wol gone by that one waye and by that other, and I woll confirme the thynges that ben purposed now on thys syde, and nowe on that side. Two thynges ther ben, in whiche the effecte of al the dedes of mankind standeth, that is to sayne, wyll and power: and if that one of these two fayleth, there nis nothynge that maye be done. For yf that wyll

lacketh

lacketh, there nys no wight that vnderstandeth to do that he wol not done: And if power fayleth, the wyll nys but ydle, and stante for nought. And therof cometh it, that if thou se a wight that wolde getten that he may not get ten, thou mayst not doute that power ne fayleth him to hauen that he wolde. Boece. This is open and cleere (qõ I) me it ne may not bene denyed in no maner. Philo. And yf thou se a wight (quod she) that hath done that he wold done, thou nyl not doute, that he ne hath had power to done it. B. No (quod I) Phi. And in that that euery wight maye, in that men holden hem mighty so done a thyng. In somoche as a man is mighty to done a thig, in so moch men holde him myghty: and in that that he ne may, in that men demen him to be feble. Boe. I confesse it well (qõ I) Phi. Remembre the (quod she) that I haue gathered and shewed by the forsayde reasons, that all the entencion of the wyl of mankynde, whiche that is ladde by dyuers studyes, hasteth to comen to blysfulnesse. Boe. It remembreth me well (qõ I) that it hath bene shewed. Philoso. And recorderh the naughte than (quod she) that blysfulnesse is thylke same good that men requyren, so that whan blysfulnesse is requyred of all: Boece. It recorderh me nat (quod I). For I bere it alwaye in my memorie fyxed. Philo. If folke than (quod she) good and e badde reforen hem without differences of entencyon to comen to good. Boece. This is very consequence (qõ I) Philo. And certaine is (qõ she) that by getting of good be men maked good. Boe. That is certayne (quod I). Philo. Than getten good mẽ that they desyren. Boece. So it semeth (quod I). Philoso. But wicked folke (quod she) if they gettẽ the good that they desiren, they ne mowen not be wicked. Boe. So it is (quod I). Phi Than so as that one and that other (quod she) desyren the good, and the good folke getten the good, and not þ wicked folke: Than it is no doute that the good folke ne be mighty, and wicked folke be feble. Boe. Who so that euer douteth of this, he ne maye not consyder the nature of thynges ne the consequence of reasons. Philosophi. And ouer this (quod she) if that there ben two thynges that haue one same purpose by kynde. And that one of hem pursueth and performeth that same thyng by naturell office, and that other ne may not done thilke office naturell, but followeth by other maner, than is conuenable to nature, him that accomplysheth his purpose kyndely, and yet he ne accomplysheth not his owne purpose: whether of these two demest thou for more mighty. Boece. If that I confesse (quod I) that thou woldest say, algates I desyre yet to herken it more plainly of the. Philo. Thou nyte not than denye (quod she) that the mouement of goynge nys in men by kynde. Boece. No forsothe (quod I) Philoso. Ne thou doutest not (quod she) that thylke naturell office of goynge, ne be the office of fete. Boece. I ne doute it not (quod I). Philo. Than (quod she) yf that a wyght be mighty to moue and gothe vpon hys fete, and another, to whome thylke naturell office of fete lacketh, enforseth hym to go creepynge on hys hande, whyche of these two oughte to be holden the more myghty by right. Boece. Knytte forthe (quod I) the remenaunte. Philosophi For no wyght ne douteth, that he that maye goon by naturel office of fete, ne be more mighty thanne he that ne maye not. But the soueraine good (quod she) that is euen lyke purposed to the good and to the badde. The good folke seken it by naturell office of vertues, and shrewes enforcen hem to getten it by dyuerse couetises of erthly thinges, which that nys no naturell office to getten thylke soueraine good. Trowest thou that it be any otherwyse. Boe. Naye (quod I). For the consequence is open, and shewynge of thynges that I haue graunted, that nedes good folke moten ben myghty, and shrewes moten bene feble and vnmyghty. Philoso. Thou renneste a ryght before me (qõ she) and thys is þ iudgement, that is to sayne, I iudge of right, as thyse leches ben wont to hopen of sicke folke, whan they apperceyuẽ, that nature is redressed and withstandeth to the maladye. But for I se the nowe al redy to the withstandyng, I shall shewe the more thilke and contynuel reasons. For loke how greatly sheweth the febleneſſe and infirmyte of wycked folke, that ne mowen not comen to that her naturell entencion leadeth hem: And yet almoste thylke naturel entencyon constrayneth hem. And what were to demen than of shrewes, yf thylke naturel helpe had forleten hem, the which naturell helpe of entencion gothe alwaye before hem, and is so great, that vneth it may be ouercomen. Consyder than how great defaute of power, and howe great febleſſe there is in wicked felonous folke, as who saith, the gret

ter thynge that is coueited, and the desyre not accomplysshed, of the lasse might is he that coueyteth it, and may not acomplysshe. And for thy philosophie sayth thus by souerain good: Ne shrewes ne requiren not lyghte medes ne vayne games, which they ne maye not folowen ne holden, but they sayen of thilke somme of the heyght of thynges, that is to sayne, souerain good. Ne these wrecches ne comen not to thessecte of souerayne good, the which they enforcen hem onely to getten by nightes & by dayes, in gettyng of whiche good, þ strength of good folke is ful wel ysene. For ryght as thou myghtest demen him mighty of goyng, that goeth on hys fete tyll he myght comen to thilke place, fro the whiche place there ne lay no way further to be gone: right so must thou nedes demē him for ryght mighty, which that getteth and atteyneth to the ende of all thynges, whiche that bene to desyren, beyonde þ which ende there nys nothynge to desyre. Of the whyche power of good folke men maye conclude, that we wicked men semen to be bare yne and naked of all strength. For why forleten they vertues and folowen vyces, nys it not for that they ne knowen not the goodes? But what thyng is more feble and more cayteif, than is the blyndnesse of ignorance? or els they knowen wel, which thynges they oughten folowen, but lechery and coueityse ouerthroweth hem misturned. And certes so doth distemperaunce to feble men, that mowe not wrastlen ayen these vyces. Ne knowe they not wel that they forleten the good wylfully, and tournen hem wilfully to vyces. And in thys wyse they ne forleten not only to be myghty, but they forleten al vtterly in any wyse for to den. For they that forleten the comune fyne of all thynges that bene, they forleten also therwithal for to bene. And peraventure it shulde semen to some folke, that this wer a mervaille to sayne, that shrewes, which that conteynen the more partes of men, ne bren not, ne haue no beyng. But natheless it is so, and thus stante this thynge. For they that be shrewes, I deny not, but that they be shrewes, but I deny simplye and plainly that they ne be not, ne haue no beyng. For ryghte as thou myghtest sayne of the tarayne of a man, that it were a deed man: so graunt I wel forsothe, that vycyous folke ben wicked, but I ne may not absolute and symplie graūt that they ben. For thylke thyng that with holdeth ordre and keepeth nature, thylke thynge is and hath beynge. But what thyng fayleth that, that is to saye, he þ forleteth natures ordre, he forleteth thylke beynge that is set in his nature. But thou wolt sayne, the shrewes mowen. Certes that ne denye I not: but certes her power ne discendeth not of strēgth, but of febleſſe, for they mowen doone wickednesse, the whiche they ne myghten not, if they myghten dwellen in the forme and in the doig of good people. And thilke power shewyth euydently, that they mowen ryght naught. For so as I haue gadred & proued lytell here beforne, that yuell is not, and so as shrewes may only but shrewdnes. This conclusyon is al clere, þ shrewes ne mowen ryght naught, ne haue no power. And for as moche as thou vnderstōdest which is the strength of thys power, I haue [illegible] a lytell here beforne, that no thing was so mighty as souerayne good. Boece. That is sothe (qd I). Philo. And thylke same souerayne good maye doone none yuell. Boece. Certes no (qd I) Philos. Is there any wight than (qd she) that weneth that men mowen done al thynges. Boece. Nay man (qd I) but yf he be out of his wyt. Philo. But certes shrewes mowē don yuels (qd she). Boece. Ye wolde god (quod I) that they ne myghten done none. Philo. Than (quod she) so as he that is myghtye to done onelye good thynges, he maye done all thynges, and they that ben mighty to done yuel thynges, ne mowen not al thynges. Than is it open thynge and manyfest, that they that mowen don yuell ben of lasse power. And yet to proue this conclusyō there helpeth me this, that I haue shewed here beforne, that al power is to be nombred amonge thynges that men oughten require. And I haue shewed that all thynges þ oughten ben desyred be referred to god, right as to a maner heyght of her nature: but for to mowen done yuell and felonye, ne maye not ben referred to god. Than is not yuell of the nombre of thynges that oughten to ben desired and required. Than is it open and clere that the power ne the mouing of shrewes nis no power. And of all these thinges it sheweth wel that the good folke ben certaynly [illegible], and the shrewes doutelesse vnmighty. And it is clere and open that thilke sentence [illegible] is very and sothe, that sayth that onely wise men may don that they desyren, and shrewes mowen hauten that hem lyketh, but that they desyren, that is to sayne to come to souerayne

good,

good, they ne haue no power to accomplysshe that. For shrewes done what hem lyste, whan by the thinges in which they beleven, they wenen to attayne to thilke good that they desyren, but they ne getten ne attayne not therto, for vyces ne comen not to blysfulnesse.

Quos vides sedere celsos, Solii culmine regis, purpura cleros nitente. &c.

Who so that the couertures of her payne apparayles mixt stripe of these proude kynges that thou seest sytten an high in her chayres, glyttrynge in shynyng purpure, enuyronned with sorowful armures, manassynge with cruell mouth, blowyng by woodnesse of hert, he shulde sene that thilke lordes beaten within her corages full strayte chaynes: for lechery tourmenteth hem on that one side with gredy venimes and troublable ire, that arayseth in hem the flode of troublynges, tourmenteth on that other syde, her thought or sorowe hath hem wery & ycaught, or flyeng and dyscreuyng hope tormenteth hem. And therfore sythe thou seest one lord, that is to sayne, one tyraunte beaten so many tyrannyes, than ne doth thilke tyraunt not that he desyreth sythe he is cast downe vnder so manye wycked lordes, that is to sayne, so many vyces that haue so wyckedly lordshipe ouer hym.

Vides ne igitur quãdo in cemo probra voluntur, que probitas lucet respiciat? quo per spicuum est nunquam bonis premia. &c.

Seest thou not than in howe great lythe these shrewes ben ywrapped, and with whyche clerenesse these good folke shine. In this sheweth it wel that to good folke ne lacketh neuer mo her medes, ne shrewes lacken neuer more tormentes. For of all thynges that be done, thilke thynge for whiche any thing is done, it semeth as by eyght, that thilk thig be the mede of that, as thus: If a man renneth in the stady or in the forlonge for the crowne: than lieth the mede in the crowne for which he renneth. And I haue shewed that blysfulnesse is thilke same good, for which al thynges ben done. Than is thilke same good purposed to the werkes of mankynde, right as a commune mede, whiche mede ne maye not be discevered from good folke: For no wyghte as by eyght, from them forth that him lacketh goodnesse, ne shal be cleped good: for which thing folke of good maners her medes ne forsaken hem neuer mo. For albeit so that shrewes warren as wod as hem lyst agaynst good folke, yet neuertheless the crowne of vyrtue men, ne shall not fallen ne faden fro forayne shrewdnesse, ne benymmen not fro the corage of good people her propre honour. But yf anye wyghte reioysed hym of goodnesse, that he had taken fro wythout, as who sayth, if a man had his goodnesse of any other man than of hym self: certes he that yaue him thilke goodnesse, or els some other wighte myghte bynome it him. But for as moche as to euery wight his propre beunte yeueth him his mede, than at erst shall he faylen of mede whan he forleteth to be good. And at the laste, so as all medes ben requited, for men wenen that they be good, who is he that nold deme, that he that is right mighty of good, were parteless of mede? And of what mede shall he be reguerdoned. Certes of right fayre mede and right great, abouen al medes. Remembre the of thilke noble corallarie that I yaue the a lytel here before, and gather it togither in this maner. So as god hym self is blysfulnesse, than is it clere and certayn, that al good people ben maked blysful, for they ben good and thylke people that ben blysful, it acordeth and is conuenable to be goddes. That is the mede of people suche, that no daye ne shal empairen it, ne no wyckednesse shall dyrken it, ne power of no wight ne shal not amenuse it, that is to saine, that ben maked goddes. And sythe it is thus, that good men ne faylen neuer more of her mede, certes no man ne may doute of the vndepartable payne of shrewes, that is to saine, that the paine of shrewes departeth not from hem self neuer mo. For so as good and yuell, and payne and medes be contrarye, it mote nedes be, that right as we se betyden in guerdone of good, that also mote the payne of the yuel answer by the contrary parties to shrewes. Nowe than so as bountye and prowesse ben mede to good folke, also is shrudnesse it self tourmente to shrewes. Than who so euer is enterched & defouled with payne, he ne doubteth not, that he is enterched and defouled vnder yuell. Yf shrewes than wolden prayse hem self, may it semen to hem that they ben with

outrn partie of tourment, sythe they ben such that the vttrest wickednesse, þ is to saye, wicked thewes, which is the vttrest & worst kind of shrewdnesse, ne defoulieth ne emecherth not hem onely, but enfeebleth & enuenymeth greatly. And also lohe on shrewes, that ben the contrarie partie of good men, howe greate payne felowshyppeth and foulerth hem: for thou hast lerned a lytel here beforne, that al thyng that is and hath beyng, is one, and thilke same one is good: than is thys the consequence, that it semeth wel, that all thyng that is and hath beynge, is good, that is to sayne, as who sayth, that beynge, vnite and goodnesse is all one.

And in thys maner it folowerh than, that all thynge that fayleth to be good, it shunneth for to be and for to haue any maner being: wherfore it is that shrewes shunten for to be that they weren. But thylke other forme of mankynde, that is to sayne, the fourme of the bodye wythout, sheweth þ these shrewes weren whylom men, wherfore whan they bene perverted and tourned in to malyce, certes than they haue forlorne the nature of mankynde: But so as onelye bountie and prowesse maye enhaunsen euerye man, ouer men: than moste it nedes be that shrewes, which that shrewdnesse hath caste out of the condycion of mankynde, bene put vnder the meryte and deserte of men. Than betydeth it, that if thou seeste a wight whiche that is transtourmed in to vices, thou mayest not wene that he be a man: For if he be ardaunte in auarycc, and that he be a rauenour by violence of forayne rychesse, thou shalte sayne that he is lyke a wolfe. And if he be felonous and withouten reste, and exercyse his tonge to chydinges, thou shalte liken him to the hounde. And if he be a priuy awaytour hydde, and reioyseth him to rauisshe by wyles, thou shalte sayne hym lyke to the fore whelpes. And yf he be distempred & quaketh for ire, men shall wenen that he beareth the corage of a lyon. And if he be dredeful and flyenge, and dredeth thynges whyche that ne ought ben not to be dredde, men shal holde him lyke to the hart. And yf he be slowe and asoyled and lache, men shall holde hym lyke to a an asse. And yf he be lyghte and vnstedfaste of corage, and chaungeth aye his studyes, men shal holde him lyke to the byrdes. And if he be plounged in foule and vncleene luxuryes, he is withholden in the foule delyces of the foule fatye. This foloweth it, that he that forleeseth bonte and prowesse, he forleeseth to be a man, sythe he ne may not passen in the condycion of god, he is turned in to a beest.

Vela Naricii ducis, et bagas pelago rates,
Eurus appulit ilium, pulchra qua resides dea,
Solis edita semine. &c.

Vlixus the wyse arryued þ the ylles of Ulixes duke of the cyte of Narice and his wandrynge shyppes by the see in to the yle there as Circes the fayre goddesse doughter of the sonne dwelleth, that medleth to her newe gestes, drinkes that ben touched & maked to enchauntements. And after þ hyr hande had yeuen hem drynke, they had chaūged hyr gestes in to diuers maners, that one of hem is couered his face with forme of a Boor, that other is chaunged in to a Lyon of the countre of Marmorike, and his nayles & his tethe weren. That other of hem is newlyche chaunged in to a wolfe, & howleth whan he wolde wepe, that other goth debonayrly in the house as a Tygre of Inde. But all be it so that the godheed of Mercury that is cleped þ byrde of Archadie hath had mercy of þ duke Ulyxes besieged with dyuerse yuelles, & hath vnbounden him fro þ pestilence of his hostesse, algates the towers and the mayneres hadde by this ydrawen in to hyr mouthes, and dronken the wicked drinkes. They þ were worden swyne, hadden by this schaunged hyr mete of breed, for to eten akorne of Okes. None of hyr lymmes ne dwelleth with hem hoole, but they haue lost the boyce and þ body, only her thought dwelleth with hem stable, þ wepeth and bywayleth the monstruous chaungynge that they suffren. O ouer lyght hande, as who sayth feble and lyght is the hand of Circes þ enchaunteresse, that chaungeth the bodyes of folke in to bestes to regarde and to compasse on of mutacyon that is maked by byces, ne the herbes of Circes ne be not myghty, for al be it so that they may chaungen the lymmes of the body, algate yet they may not chaunge the herres, for within is yhyd the strēgth and the vigoure of men in þ secretoure of hyr herres, that is to saine, the strength of reason, but thylke venymes of vyces to drawen a man to hem more mightely thā the venym of Circes, for vyces ben so cruell that they perisen & thoo-

come

wbe passen the courage within, and thoughe they ne anoye not the body, yet byces woode to destroyen men by wounde of thought.

Tu ergo fateor, inquã, nec iniuria dici video viciosos, eam et si humani corporis speciem gerant. &c.

Than sayde I thus: I confesse and am aknowe it (qõ I) ne I ne se not that men maye saye, as by right, that shrewes ben chaunged in to beestes, by the qualyte of her soules, all be it so that they kepen yet the forme of the bodye of mankynde: but I wolde not of shrewes, of whiche the thought cruel & woode, wooderh alwaye to the destruccion of good mẽ, that it were leful to hem to done that.

Certes (quod she) ne it is not leful to hem, as I shall well shewe the in conenable place: but natheles if so were that thilke that men were bene lefull to shrewes, were bynommed hem, so that they ne myght not anoyen or don harme to good men, certes a great partye of the payne to shrewes shulde bene alleged and wiped. For all be it so that it ne seme credyble thynge peraventure to some folke, that it mote nedes be that ꝑ shrewes ben more wrecches and sely, whan they maye full done and parfourme that they coueyten, than yf they myght not accomplysshe that they coueyten. For if so be that it be wretchednesse to wilnen to done yuel, than is it more wretchednesse to mowen done yuel, without whiche mowyng, the wretched wyll shulde languysshe without effecte. Than sythe euery of these thynges hath his wretchydnesse, that is to sayne, wyll to done yuell, and mowynge to done yuell, it mote nedes be that they shrewes be contrayned by her vnselynesses, that wolen & mowen and parfournen felonyes and shrudnesses.

Bo. I accorde me (qõ I) but I desyre greatly, that shrewes loosen soone thylke vnselynesse, that is to sayn, that shrewes weren dispoyled of mowynge to done yuell. Phylo. So shullen they (quod she) soner peraventure than thou woldest, or soner than they hem self wene: for there nys nothyng so late in so shorte bondes of this lyfe, that is longe to abyde, namely to a wrange immortell. Of whyche shrewes the great hope & the hye compassynges of shrudnesse, is oft destroied by a sodeyn ende or they be ware. And that thyng establysshyth to shrewes, ꝑ ende of her shrewdnes, for if ꝑ shrewdnes maketh wretches, than must he nedes be most wretche ꝑ longest is a shrewe, the whiche wycked shrewes wolde I deuyn aldermoste caytyfes and vnsely, if her shrewdnes ne were hynysshed at leest way by vttereste dethe, for yf I haue concluded sothe of the vnselynesse of shrewdnes thã sheweth it plainly, that thilke wretchednes, is withouten ende, the which is certayne to be perdurable. Boece. Certes (qõ I) this conclusyon is harde and wonderful to graunte. But I knowe well that it accordeth moche to thynges that I haue graunted here before. Philosd. Thou hast (quod she) ryghte estymacion of thys. But who so euer wene that it be a harde thynge to accorde hym to a conclusion, it is right that he shewe that some of the premysses bẽ false, or els he mote shewe that the collacyon of proposycyons nys not spedeful to a necessary conclusyon. And yf it ne be not so, but that the premysses ben igrauted, there nys not why he shulde blame the argument. For this thing ꝑ I shal tel the nowe, ne shall not seme lasse wonderfull, but of the thynges that bene taken. Also it is necessary, as who sayth it foloweth of that which that is purposed before. Boece. What is ꝑ (quod I) Phi. Certes (quod she) ꝑ is, ꝑ these wycked shrewes be more blysful or els lasse wretches that abyen ꝑ tourmentes that they haue deserued, than if no payne of Justyce ne chastysed hem. Ne this ne say I not nowe, for that any man myght thynke ꝑ the maners of shrewes bene corryged and chastysed by vengraunce, & that they be brought to the ryght way by the drede of tourmente, ne for that they yeuen to other folkes ensample to flyen fro vyces.

But I vnderstand yet in another maner, that shrewes ben more vnsely whan they ne be not punysshed, all be it so that there ne be had no reason or lawe of correccyon ne none ensample of lokynge. Boece. And what maner shall that ben (qõ I) other than hath be tolde here before. Philos. Haue we not graunted than (quod she) that good folke ben blyssfull, and shrewes ben wretches. Boece. yes (quod I) Philo. Than (quod she) yf ꝑ anye good were added to the wretchednesse of any wyght, nys he not more wofull, than he that ne hathe no medling of good in his solitary wretchednes. Boe. So semyth it (quod I). Phi. And what sayest thou than (quod she) of thylke wretche

that lacketh all goodes, so that no good myx medled in his wzetchednesse, and yet ouer all his wickednesse, foz whiche he is a wzetche, þ there be yet another yuel annexed and knyt to hym, shall not men demen hym moze vnsely, than thylke wzetche, of whyche the vnselines is relieued by the participacion of some good. Boece. Why shuld he not (quod I) Phi. Than certes (quod she) han shrewes whan they ben punyshed somewhat of good annexed to hir shrewdnesse, that is to sayne, the same payne that they suffren, whiche þ is good, by þ reason of Iustyce. And whā thilke same shrewes escapen without tourment, than haue they sō what moze of yuell, yet ouer the wyckednesse that they han done, that is to sayn, defaute of paynes, whyche defaute of payne thou hast graunted is yuel, foz the deserte of felony.

Boece. I ne may not denye it (quod I) Philo. Moche moze than (qō she) ben shrewes vnsely whan they bene wzongfully deliuered fro payne, than whan they bene punyshed by ryghtfull vengeaunce. But this is open thynge and clere, that it is ryght that shrewes ben punyshed, and it is wyckednesse & wzonge that they escapen vnpunished. Boece. Who might denye it (quod I) Philosophie. But (quod she) may any man deny that all that is ryght ne is good: and also the contrarye, that all that is wzonge is wycked. Boece. Certes (quod I) these thynges ben clere ynoughe, and that we haue concluded a lytel here befozne. But I pray the that thou tell me yf thou accozdest to letten no tourmēt to the soules, after that the body is ended by the deth, that is to sayn: vnderstandest thou aught, that soules haue anye tourment after the dethe of the body. Philoso. Certes (quod she) yea, and that ryght greate, of whyche soules (quod she) I trowe that some ben tourmented by asperneste of payne, and some soules I trowe ben exercised by a pourgynge mekenesse, but my counsayle nys nat to determyne of thys paynes. But I haue trauayled and tolde yet hyderto, foz thou shuldest knowe that the mowyng of shrewes, whyche mowynge the semeth to be vnwozthy, nis no mowynge, and eke of shrewes, of whyche thou playnedest þ they ne were not punished that thou woldest se that they ne were neuer mo withouten the tourmentes of her wicked nesse. And of the lycence of the mowynge to thou yuel, that thou prayedest þ it myghte sone be ended, and that thou woldest sayne lernen that it ne shoulde not longe endure. And that shrewes ben moze vnsely yf they were of longer durynge, and moste vnsely yf they were perdurable. And after this I haue shewed þ, that moze vnsely ben shrewes whan they escapen without her ryghtfull payne, than whan they ben punished by ryghtfull vengeaunce. And of this sentence folowerth it, that thā ben shrewes constrayned at the last wyth moste greuous tourment, whan men wene that they ne be not punyshed. Boece. Whan I consyder thy reasons (quod I) I ne trowe nat that men sayne any thynge moze veryly. And yf I tourne ayen to the studyes of men, who is he to whom it shulde seme, that he ne shulde hate onely leuen these thynges, but eke gladly breken hem. Philo. Certes (quod she) so it is, but mē may nat, foz they haue theyr eyen so wont to the derknesse of erthly thinges, that they ne may nat lyfte hem vp to þ lyght of clere soothfastnesse. But they ben lyke to bzydes, of whiche the nyght lyghtneth her lokinges, and the day blyndeth hem. For whan men loken nat the ordre of thinges, but her lustes and talentes, they weme that either the leue oz þ mowynge to done wickednesse, oz els the scapynge without payne be welefull. But consyder the iudgement of þ perdurable lawe, foz yf thou cōferme thy courage to the best thinges, thou ne hast no nede of no iudge to yeuen the pryx oz mede, foz thou hast ioyned thy selfe to the moste excellent thynges. And if thou haue enclined thy studyes to the wycked thinges, ne take no foreyne wzechery out of thy self, foz thou thy selfe hast thzist thy selfe in to wycked thinges, right as thou mightest loke by diuers tymes the foule erthe and the heuen, and that al other thinges stynten fro without, so that thou were in neyther, ne se nothynge moze. Than sholde it semen to the, as by only reason of lokynge, that thou were nowe in the sterres and nowe in the erth, but the people loketh nat on these thinges. What than, shal we than approche vs to hem that I haue shewed that ben like to bestes. And what woldest thou sain of this, if that a man had al foryolne his sight, & had foryeten þ he euer sawe, & wened that nothing fayled him of perfection of mankynde. Nowe we which mighten sene the same thinges, wolde we nat sayne that he were blynde, ne also ne accozdeth nat the people to that I shall sayn, the which thinge is susteined by as stronge foundementes of reason, that is to

sayne

ple, that more busely ben they that don wrõges to other folke, than they that the wronge suffren. Boe. I wolde heren thylke same reasons (quod I) Phi. Demyest thou (quod she) that all shrewes ne ben worthy to have tourment. Nay (qõ I) Philoso. But (quod she) I am certayne by many reasons, that shrewes ben busely. Boe. It accordeth (quod I) Philo. Than ne doutest thou not (quod she) that thylke folke þ̃ ben worthy of tourment, that they ne be wrecches. Boece. It accordeth well (quod I). Philoso. If thou were than sette a iuge or a knower of thinges, whether trowest thou that men shulde tourmenten hem that hathe done wronge, or els hem that suffred the wronge. Boece. I doute not (quod I) that I nolde do sufficyent satisfaction, to hem that haue suffred wronge, by the sorowe of hem that hath done wronge. Phi. Than semeth it (quod she) that the doer of wronge is more wrecch, than he that suffred wronge. Boece. That folowerth wel (quod I) Philoso. Than (quod she) by these causes and by other causes, that bẽ enforced by the same ordre, þ̃ filthe or synne by þ̃ proper nature of it maketh mẽ wrecches, & it sheweth wel þ̃ the wronges that men don nis not the wrecchednesse of hym that receyueth the wronge, but the wrecchednesse of him that doth þ̃ wronge. But certes (quod she) these oratours or aduocates done al the contrarye, for they enforcen hem to commoue the Juges to haue pyte of hem that done the greuaũces & the wronges, the whiche shrewes it were a more couenable thynge, that the accusours or aduocates, nat wroth, but pyteous & debonayre ledden tho shrewes that haue don wronges to the iugement, right as men leden syke folke to the leche, for that they shulden syken out the maladyes of synne by tourment. And by thys couenaunt either þ̃ entente of aduocates shulde cesse in al, or els if the office of the aduocates wold better profiten to men, it shulde be tourned in to the habyte of accusacion, that is to sayn, they shulden accuse shrewes and not excusen hem. And eke the shrewes hem self, if it were lefful to hem to sen at any clyft þ̃ vertue that they haue forletten, & sawen þ̃ they shulde putten adowne the sylthes of her vices by þ̃ tourmentes of paynes, they ne oughten not rycht for þ̃ recompensacion, for to geten hem bounte and prowesse, whiche that they haue lost, demen and holde that the yike payues weren tourmentes to hem, and eke they wolden refuse the attendaunce of her aduocates, and taken hem self to her Juges and to her accusours, for þ̃ whiche it betideth, that as to the wyse folkes, ther nys no place yleften to hate, that is to sayn, that hate ne hath no place amonge wyse men. For no wight nyl haten good men, but if he were ouermuche a foole, and for to haten shrewes, it nis no reason, for ryght as languishynge is maladye of bodye, ryght so ben vyces and synne malady of courage. And so as we ne demen nat þ̃ they which that ben syke of her body, ben worthy to ben hãted, but rather worthy of pyte. Well more worthy nat to ben hated, but for to bẽ had in pyte ben they, of whyche the thoughtes ben cõstrayned by felonous wyckednesse, þ̃ is more cruel than any languyshynge of body.

Quid tantos iuuat excitare motus, Et propria fatum sollicitare manu. Si mortem petitis, propinquat ipsa sponte sua, volucres nec remoratur equos. &c.

What delyteth you to excyten so great mournge of hatredes, & to hasten & busyen the fatal dispolicion of your dethe wyth your propre hãdes, that is to sayne, by batayls or contekes. For if ye asken the deth, it hasteth him of hys owne wyl, ne dethe ne taryeth not his swyfte horse. And þ̃ men that the serpẽtes, & the lion, and the tigre, and the beere, and the bore, seken to sleen with their teth, yet thylk same men seken to sleen eueriche of hem other with swerde. Lo, for her maners ben diuers and discordaunt, they mouen vnryghtfull hostes & cruel batayles, and wynnen to peryshe by entrechaungynge of dartes, but the reason of cruelte nys not ynough ryghtful. Wylt thou thãne yelden a couenable guerdõ to the desertes of men, loue ryghtfully good folkes, and haue pyte on shrewes.

Hinc ego video inquã, quæ sit vel felicitas vel miseria in ipsis probozum atqz impzoborum meritis constituta. Sed in hac ipsa fortuna populari. &c.

Thys I se well (quod I) eyther what blysfulnesse, or elles what vnselynesse is establyshed in the desertes of good men and of shrewes. But in thys yike fortune of the people I

so somwhat of good, and somwhat of yuel. For no wyse manne had not leuer be cryed poore and nedye, and nameiesse, thanne for to dwelleu in hys cyte, and flouren of rychesse, and be redoutable of honour, and stronge of power. For in this wise more clerely and witnessfully is the office of wyse men treated, thā the blyssfulnesse of power, and gouernours, is as it wer shadde amonges the people, that be neyghbours and subiectes, sithe that nameiy prison, lawe, and these other tourmentes of lanful paines, be rather owed to felonous citezyns: for the whiche felonous cytezyns the paynes be establysshed, more than for good people. Bo. Than I merueyle greatly (qō I) why that the thinges be so myssse entrechaunged, that tourmentes of felonyes pressen and confounden good people, and shrewes rauisshen medes of vertue, a ben in honours and great estates. And I desire ehe for to weten of the, what semeth the to be the reson of this so wrongful a conclusion. For I wolde wonder wel the lasse, if I trowed that all thinges were medled with fortunous hap. But nowe erreth and encreaseth myn astonyenges god gouernour of thynges, that so as god yeueth oft tymes to good men goodes and myrthes, and to shrewes yuel and aspre thynges: And yeueth ayen to good folke hardnesse, and to shrewes he graunteth hem her wyll, and that they desire. What difference may there be betwene that that god dothe, and happe of fortune, yf men knowe not the cause why it is. Philo. Ne it is no merueyle (qō she) thoughe that men wenen, that there bee somwhat folythe and confuse, whan the reason of the ordre is vnknowen: but although that thou ne know not the cause of so great a disposicion. Natheiesse, for as muche as god the good gouernour attempreth a gouerneth ỳ world, ne doute the not but al thynges ben don aryght.

Si quis Areturi sidera nescit,
Mergatq; ferras equore flammas,
Propinqua summo cardine labi,
Cum nimis sciens explicet ortus,
Cur legat tardus plaustra Bootes. &c.

Who so ỳ know not ỳ sterres of Arcture, turned to ỳ souerayn centre or poynte, ỳ is to sayne, turned nigh to ỳ souerain pole of the firmament, a wote not why the sterre Boores passeth or gathereth his wayues, a drēcheth his late flambes in the see, and why that Bootes the sterre beholdeth hys ouerswyfte arysynges, than shal he wondren of the lawe of the high ayre. And eke, yf thou ne knowe not why that the hornes of the full moone waxen pale and infect, by the boundes of the derke night, and howe the moone derke and confuse, discouereth ỳ sterres that she had couered by her clere vysage. The comune errour mouueth folkes and maketh wery her basyns of bras by thilke strokes, that is to say, that there is a manet people that highte Cotidates, that wenen that whā the moone is in the eclypse that it be enchaunted, and therfore for to rescue the moone they beaten her basyns wyth thilke strokes. Ne no manne ne wondreth whan the blastes of the winde Chorus, berein the trowbes of the see, by quakyng floodes. Ne no manne wondreth whan the weyght of the snowe, harded by the colde, is resolued by the burning heate of Phebus the sonne, for here fewmen redily the causes. But the causes yhidde, that is to sayne in heuen, troublen the bresies of me. The mouable people is astonyed of al thinges that comen fride and sodaynly in our age, but the troubly errour of our ignorāce departeth fro vs, so ỳ yf they wisten the cause why that suche thynges beryden, errours they shulden cease to seme wonders.

Ita est inquā. Sed cum tui mumeris sit interitum rerum causas euoluere, detectasq; caligine explicare rationes: queso te hinc decernas. a cete.

Thus it is (quod I) but so as thou hast yeuen or beheyght me to vnwrappe the hydde causes of thynges, a to discouer me the reasons couered wyth darkenesse, I praye thee, that thou deuyse and iuge me of thys matter, and that thou doe me to vnderstande it, for thys myracle of thys wonder troubleth me tyg greatlye. And thanne she a lyteil what smylynge sayde. Thou cleapest me (quod she) to tell that is greatest of all thynges, that mowen ben asked, and to the whiche question vnneth there aught ynoughe to lauen it, as who sayethe, vnneth is there anye thynge to answere parfytlye to thy questyon, for the matter of it is such, that whan o doute is determyned and cutte awaye, there waxen other doutes without nombre, rygbt as the heedes

hedes of Idre the serpent wayen, the wiſich serpent Hercules slough: ne there ne were no manere ne none ende, but if a wight constrayned the doutes, by a ryght lyuely and quicke eye of thought, that is to sayne, by bygoure and strength of wytte. For in thys maner men weren wonte to maken questions of the simplicite of the purueyaunce of God, & of ꝑ ordre of destine, & of sodayne hap, & of knowing of predestinacyon dyuine. And of the lyberte of frewyll, the whiche thynges thou thy selfe appercyueden wel, of what weight they be. But for as muche as the knowynges of these thynges is a maner porcyon or medycine to the, al be it so that I haue lytel tyme to done it, yet neuertheleſſe I wolde enforcen me to shewen somwhat of it: but although the nothinges of dyte of mi like deliteth the, thou muſte ſuffren and forbearen a lytel of thylke delyte, whyle that I weue to the resons knit by ordre. Bo. As it lyketh to the (quod I) ſo do. Philo. Tho spake she right as by another begynnynge, and sayd ryght thus. The engendryng of al thynges (quod she) and al the progressyons of mouable nature, and al that moueth in any maner, taketh hys causes, hys ordre, & his fourmes, of the stabilenes of diuine thought: And thylke dyuyne thought that is set and put in the toure, that is to sayn, in the heyght of the simplycite of god, stablyſheth many manere giſes to the thynges that ben to done, the which maner whan that men loken it, in the pure clennesſe of the dyuyne intellygence, is cleped purueyaunce. But whan thylke maner is referred by men, to thynges that it moueth or diſponeth, than of olde men it was cleped deſtynye, the whiche thinges, if that any wight loketh wel in hys thought, ꝑ strength of that one and of that other, he shal lyghtlye mowe sene, that these two thynges ben dyuers. For purueyaunce is thylke dyuyne reason, that is eſtablyſhed in the soueraine prynce of thynges, the which purueyaunce diſponeth al thynges. But certes deſtinye is the diſpoſycion and the ordinaunce cleyng to mouable thynges, by the whiche diſpoſycion the purueyaunce knytteth all thynges in her ordre: For purueyaunce enbraſeth al thinges to heape, although they be diuers, and al thoughe they be infinite, but deſtenye certayne departeth and ordayneth al thynges syngulerly, and deuydeth in mouyng, in places, in formes, and in tymes, as thus: Let the vnfoldynge of temporal ordinaunce aſſembled and oned in the lokynge of the dyuyne thought be cleaped purueyaunce, and thylke same aſſemblynge and onynge deuyded and vnfolden, lette that be called deſtynye. And al be it so that these thynges ben dyuers, yet neuertheleſſe hanged that one on that other, for why, the ordre deſtinably procedeth of the symplycyte of purueyaunce. For ryght as a werkemã perceyueth in his thought, ꝑ forme of a thyng that he wol make, and moueth the effect of the werke, and leadeth that he had loked before in hys thought symply and preſently by corporall ordynaunce: certes ryght so god in his purueyaunce diſponeth syngulerly and stably, the thynges that be to done, but he adminiſtreth in maners and in dyuers tymes by deſtynye, thilk same thiges that he hath diſponed, than whether deſtynye be exercised either by some diuine spirites, seruãtes to the diuine purueyaunce, or els by some soule, or els by all nature seruynge to god, or els by the celeſtyall mouynges of sterres, or els by the vertue of angels, or els by dyuers subteilty of diuels, or els by any of hem, or els by hem all, the deſtynable ordinaunce is wouen and accõplyſhed. Certes it is open thyng that the purueyaunce is an vnmouable and symple fourme of thynges to doone, and the mouable bondr and the temporal ordynaunce of thynges, whiche that the diuyne simplicite of pourueyaunce hath ordayned to done, that is deſtynye. For whiche it is that all thynges that ben put vnder deſtynye, ben certes subiectes vnto pourueyaunce, to whiche pourueyaunce deſtynye it ſelfe is ſubiecte and vnder, but ſome thynges bẽ put vnder purueyãce, that surmounten the ordynaunce of deſtenie: And tho ben thylke that stablye ben fyxed nygh to the firſte godheed, they surmounten the order of deſtynable mouablyte. For right as cercles turnen aboute a same centre or aboute a poynt, thylke cercle that is innereſt or moſte within, he ioyneth to the symplesſe of the middle, & is as it were a centre or a poynt to that other cercles, that tournen about hym: and thylke that is vttereſt, compaſſed by larger enuironnynge, is vnfolde by larger spaces, in ſo much as it is fertherest fro the middeleſt symplycite of the poynte. And yf there be any thing that knytteth and felouſhipperth hym ſelfe to thylke myddle poynte, it is conſtrayned in to ſymplycite, that is to say, in to

vnmouablite

bamonablyte, and it ceaseth to ben stad and fyxte dyuerstly. Right so by semblable reasō, thilke thing that departeth furtherest fro the first thought of god, it is vnfolden and also submitted to greater bondes of destyne, and in so muche is the thynge more free and lose fro dignite, as it asketh and holdeth nere to thylke centre of thynges, that is to sayne, to god. And yf the thynge cleueth to the stedfastnesse of the thought of god, & be without mouynge, certes it surmounteth the necessyte of destenye. Than suche comparison as is skyllynge to vnderstandynge, and of thynge that was engēdred to thing that is of time to eternyte, and of the cercle to the centre, right so is the ordre of mouable destine, to the stable simplycite of pourueyaunce. Thylke ordinaunce moueth the heuen and the sterres, and attempreth the elemētes togyder among hem self, and transformeth hem by entrechaungeable mutacīō. And thylke same ordre neweth ayen al thynges growyng and falyng adowne, by semblable progressiōs of sedes and of sexus, that is to sayne, male and female: And thys ylke ordre constrayneth the fortunes and the dedes of mē by a bonde of causes, not able to be vnbounden: the whiche destynable causes whan they passen out fro the beginnynges of vnmouable pureueyaunce, it mote nedes be þ they ne be not mutable, as thus: Be the thinges wel gouerned, if that the simplicite dwelyng in the diuyne thought, sheweth forth the ordre of causes vnable to be bowed. And this ordre constrayneth by the proper stabilite the mouable thynges, or els they shulden flete folily. For whiche it is, that thinges semen confuse and troublye to vs men, for we ne knowen not consyder thylke ordynaunce. Neuertheles, the proper maner of euery thyng, dressyng hym to good disposeth hem al, for there nys nothyng done for yuel, for thylke thynge that is done by wicked folke, nis not done for yuel. The whiche shrewes, as I haue shewed ful plentrously seke good, but wicked errour misturneth hem, ne the order cominge fro the poynte of souerayne good, ne encyneth not fro hys begynninge. But thou mayste saye, what vnrest may ben a worse confusyon, thā that good men haue somtyme aduersyte, and somtyme prosperite: and shrewes haue now also thynges that they desyren, & nowe thynges that they haten. Whether men trowe nowe in suche holynesse of thought, as who sayth be men now so wise, that suche folke as they demē to be good folk or shrewes, that it mote nedes be, þ folke be such as they wenen. But in this maner domes of menne discorden, that thylke men that some folke demen worthy of mede, other folke deme hem worthy of torment, but let vs graunt: I suppose that some man may wel deme or know the good people and the badde, may he than know & se thylke interest attemperaūce of corage, as it hath be wonte to be sayde of bodyes, as who sayth: may a man speaken of complexcions & attemperaūce of bodies, ne it ne is not, as who saith, but it is lyke a merueyle or a miracle to hem that ne knowe it not, why that swete thinges be conenable to some bodyes, þ ben hole, & to som people bitter thiges be conenable: & also why some people ben holpē with light medicines, and some people bē holpen with bitter medicines: but natheless tho that knowen the maner, & the temperaūce of heale and of maladie, ne marueyleth it nothyng. But what other thing semeth helth of corages but bounte & what other thing semeth maladie of corage but vices, who is els keper of good & driuer away of yuel, but god the gouernour & leder of thoughtes: the whiche god, whan he hath beholden from the hygh tour of hys pureueyaunce, he knoweth what is conenable to any wight, and leaneth hem that he wot wel that is conenable to hem. Lo, herof cometh & herof is done thys miracle of the ordre destynable, whan god that al knoweth doth such thyng, of whiche thyng vnknowyng folke den astonyed, but for to constrayne, as who sayth, but for to comprehende and tel a fewe thinges of the diuine depenesse, the whiche that mannes reason maye vnderstande. Thylke man that thou weneste to ben right iuste & right keping of equite, the contrarye of that semeth to the diuine pureueyaūce that all wote. And Lucan my kamplier telleth, that the victorious cause liked to the goddes, and the cause ouercome lyketh to Caton. Thanne what soeuer thou mayste sene þ is done in this worlde vnhoped or els vnknowē, certes it is the right ordre of thynges, but as to thy wicked opinion, it is a confusyon. But I suppose that some man be so wel shewed, that the diuine iugement & the iugement of mankynde accorden hem togyther of hym: but he is so vnstedfast of corage, that yf any aduersyte come to him, he wol forleten parauenture to continue innocencye, by

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the which he ne may not withholde fortune: than the wyse dispẽsacion of god spareth him, the which man aduersite might enpayren, for that god wyl not hym to trauayle, to whome that trauayle nys not conenable. An other man is parfyte in al vertues, and is an holye man and nyghe to god, so that the pourueyaunce of god wold deme, that it wer a felony that he were touched with any aduersites, so that he wol not suffre, that such a mã be with any bodyly maladye moued. But so (as sayd the philosopher) the moze excellent is by me sayde in great, that vertues haue edifyed the bodye of the holy man. And ofte tyme it betydeth, that the sũme of thinges that bẽ to done is taken to gouern to good folke, for that the malyce haboundaunte of shrewes shulde ben abated. And god reuelh and departeth to other folke prosperitees and aduersities, medled to heape, after the qualyte of her corages and remozdeth some folke by aduersities, for they ne shulde not waxen prowde by longe welefulnesse. And other folke he suffreth to be trauayled with harde thynges, for ỹ they shulde confermen the vertues of corage, by the exercitacyon of vsage of pacyence. And other folke dreden moze than they oughten, ỹ whiche they myghten well beaten, and some dispyse that they mowe not beare, and thilke folke god leadeth in to experiẽce of hem selfe by aspre and sorowfull thynges. And manye ther folke haue bought honourable renome of this worlde, by the price of glorious deth.

And some men that ne mowe not ben ouercomen by tourment, haue yeuen ensample to other folke, that vertue maye not ben ouercomen by aduersytyes. And of all these thynges there nis no doute, that they ne ben done ryghtfully and ozdaynly, to the parfyte good of hem, to whome we sene these thynges betyde. For certes that aduersyties cometh somtyme to shrewes, and somtyme that they deseyren, it cometh of these forsayd causes. And of sorowful thinges that betyden to shrewes, certes no man ne wondreth, for al men wene that they haue deserued it, and that they ben of wicked meryte. Of which shrewes the turmente agasteth somtyme other to doone felonyes: And somtyme it amendeth hem that suffreth the tourmentes. And the prosperyte that is yeuen to shrewes, sheweth a great argumente to good people, what thynge they shulde demen of thylke welefulnesse, whiche prosperite men sene oft serue to shrewes: In which thing I trowe that god dispenseth, for paraũture ỹ nature of some man is so ouerthrowynge to euel and so vnconenable, that the nedy powerte of hys houshold might rather agreue hym to done felonyes, and to the malady of hym god putteth remedy to yeuen hym rychesse. And some other man beholdeth hys cõscience defouled with synnes, and maketh comparyson of thys fortune and of hym selfe: and dredeth parauenture that the blysfulnesse, of whych the vsage is ioyful to hym, that the lesyng of thilke blysfulnesse ne be not sorowful to him, & therfore he wolde chaũge his maners: and for he dredeth to lese his fortune, he forleseth his wickednes. To other folkes welfulnes is yeuen vnworthily, the whiche ouerthroweth hem in to destructyon that they han deserued, and to some other folke is yeuen power to punyshen, for that it shall be cause of continuacyon & exercysynge to good folkes, and cause of turment to shrewes. For so as there nys none alyaunce bytwene good folkes and shrewes, ne shrewes ne mowẽ not accorden among hem selfe: and why not? for that shrewes discorden of hem selfe by her vices, the whiche vices al to renden her conscyences, and done ofte tyme thynges, the which thynges whan they haue don hem, they deme that tho thynges ne shulde not haue be done, for which thyng the souerayn pourueyaunce hath maked ofte time miracle: so that shrewes haue maked shrewes to ben good men. For whã that some shrewes sene that they suffre wrongefully felonyes of other shrewes, they waxen eschauked in to hate of hem that annoyed hem, and retourmen to the fruite of vertue. Than they studyen to be buxome to hem that they haue hated. Certes only is this the dyuine myght, to the whiche might yuels ben than good, whan it bereth the yuels couenably, and drawet out the effecte of any good, as who sayth, that yuel is good onely to the myght of god, for the might of god ordeyneth thilke yuel to good: for one ordre enbraceth al thynges, so that what wight departeth from the reason of thylke ordre that is assigned to him, algates yet he slideth into another ordre, so that nothyng is lefful to folye in the realme of diuyne pourueyaunce, as who sayth, nothyng is without ordynaũce in the realme of diuine pourueyaũce, sith that the right strong god gouerneth al thynges in this worlde, for

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it is not lefull for men comprehende by wytte ne vnfolden by word al the subtel ordinaunce and the dispocyon of the diuyne entente, for ony it ought to suffice to haue loked that god hym selfe, maker of al natures, ordayneth all thinges to good, whyle that he halseth to withhold the thynges that he hath maked i to his semblaunce, that is to say, for to withholden þ thinges in to good, for he him selfe is good. He chaseth out al veuels fro the bonde of his compynalties, by the ordre of the necessyte destynable: for whiche it folowyth, that yf thou loke the purueyaunce, ordeynyng the thinges that men wenen be outrageous or habound-daunt in erthes, thou shalt not seue in no place nothynge of yuell. But I se nowe that thou art charged with the weight of the question, and wery with length of my reason, and that thou abydest some swetnesse of songe, take than this draught, and whan thou art wel refreshed & refecte, thou shalt be more stedfaste to lyue in to hyther questyons or thynges.

Si vis celsi iura tonantis. Plura soleas cernere mente, Aspice summi culmina celi.

IF thou wyst wolte demen in thy pure thought, the ryghtes or the lawes of the hye thonder, that is to sayne of god, loke thou and behold þ highte of the souerayn heuen: There kepen the sterres by ryghtful alyaunce of thynges her olde peace: The Sonne ymoued by his roodye fyre, ne disturbeth nat the cold cercle of the moone, ne the sterre yclepped the Bere, that enclyneth his rauyshynge courses, abouten the sonerayn height of this worlde. Ne the same sterre Uria, nys neuermo washé in the depe westren see, ne coueryth nat to dyen hys flambes in the see of the Occian, although it se other sterres ydonged in the see: And Hesperus the sterre boodeth and yelleth alwaye the late nyghtes: And Lucifer the sterre bryngeth ayen the cleere daye. And thus maketh loue entrechaungeable, the perdurable courses, and thus is discordable batayle yput out of the countreye of the sterres. This acordaunce attempreth by ryuenlyke maners the Elementes, that the moyst thynges stryuynge with the drye thynges, yeuen place by stoundes: And that the colde thynges foymen hem by fayre to the hote thynges, & that the lyght fyre ariseth in to height, and the heuy erthes anallen by her weightes: by þ same causes the flowry yere yeldeth swete smelles, in the first sommer season watmyng, and the hote sommer dryeth the cornes, and Autumpne cometh ayen of heuy appies, and the wynty rayne bedeweth the wynter, thys attempraunce nourisheth & bryngeth forth al thynges that breeth lyfe in this worlde, & withdraweth the same attempraunce rauishynge, hyderly, demynerly, and dyeth vnder the last deth al thinges yborne. Amonge these thynges sytteth the lyghtmaker, kynge and lorde, welle and begynnynge, lawe & wise iuge, to hone equite, & gouerneth & enclyneth the brideles of thynges: And the thinges that he sterreth to gone by mouyng, he withdraweth and arresteth, and affyrmeth the vnmouable or wanyshynge thynges. For if he ne called nat ayen the ryght goyng of thynges. And if that he ne constrayned hem nat the fones in to roundnesses enclyned, the thinges that ben now continued by stable ordinaunce, they shulde departen fro me her werk, that is to sayne from her begynnyng and fallen, that is to sayne, tournen in to nought. This is the comune loue to all thynges: and all thynges aslen to ben holden by the fyne of good, for els ne myghten they nat laste, if they ne came nat eftsones ayen by loue retourned to þ cause þ hath yeuen hem beynge, þ is to sayn god.

Jam ne igitur vides quid hec omnia que diximus consequantur. Quid nam inquit. Omnem inquit ac.

SEyst thou nat than, what thynge folowyth al þ thynges that I haue sayd. Boece. What thinge quod I. Philo. Certes (quod she) al yeueth, that al fortune is good. Boece. And how shal that be (quod I). Philo. Nowe vnderstande (quod she) so as all fortune, whether so it be ioyfull fortune or aspre fortune, is yeuen either by cause of guerdonyng, or els of exercysyng of good folkes, or els because to punishen, or els chastisen shrewes: Than is al fortune good, the whiche fortune is certayn, that it be either ryghtfull, or els profytable. Boece. Forsoth this is a ful very reson (quod I) and if I consider the pourueyaunce and the deffyne that thou oughtest me a litel here before, this sentence is fastened by stedfast reson. But if it lyke vnto the, lette vs nombren hem amonges thylke thynges, of which thou sayd-

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dell a lytel here before, that they ne were not able to ben wened to the people. Phi. Why so (qd she). Bo. For that the cõmune worde of men quod I mistaketh this maner speche of fortune, and sayne ofte tymes, that the forme of some wight is wicked. P. Wylte thou than qd she that I approche a lytel to ꝑ wordes of the people, so that it seme nat to hem, that I be outerliche deported, as fro ꝑ vsage of mankynde. Bo. As thou wolte (qd I). Phi. Aperceyuest thou not (qd she) that all thynge that purseweth is good. B. Yes. (qd I) Phi. Certes all thynge that exerceth or corrigeth, it prokyeth. Boe. I confesse well (qd I) Philo. Than is it good (qd she). Boe. Why not (qd I). Phi. But this is the fortune (quod she) of hem that ryther be put in vertue, and barayten agayns aspre thinges, or els of hem that enclynen and bryngen fro vyces, and taken the way of vertue. Boe. This ne may I not denye (quod I) philo. But what sayest thou of the mery fortune that is yeuen to good people in guerdon, semeth ofte the people that it be wicked. Bo. Saye forsothe (quod I) but they demen as it is forth, that it is right good. Phi. What saiest thou of the other fortune (quod she) that although that it be aspre and restreyneth the lawes by rygbtfull turmente, weneth aught the people that it be good. Bo. May (quod I) but ꝑ people demeth that it is most contrebut of al thinges that may be thought. P. Ware nowe and loke well (quod she) lest we in forwaynge the opynyon of the people, haue confirmed and concluded thynge which that is vnable to ben wened to the people. Boece. What is that (qd I). P. Certes (qd she) it folweth or cometh of thinges that ben graunted, that al fortune what so euer it be, of hem that bene ryther in possessyon of vertue, or in the encrease of vertue, or els in the purchasing of vertue, that thylke fortune is good, & that al fortune is right wicked to hem that dwellen in shrewdenesse, as who sayth, and thus weneth nat the people. Bo. That is sothe (qd I). All be it so that no man dare confesse it, ne knowe it. Phi. Why so (qd she). For ryght as the stronge man ne semeth nat to abasshen or disdayned, as ofte tyme as he hereth the noyse of the batayle: Ne also it semeth not to ꝑ wise man to braken it greuously, as ofte as he is ledde into stryfe of fortune. For bothe to that one mã and eke to that other, thilke difficulte is the mater to that one mã of encrease of his glorious renome, and to that other man to conserue hys sapyence, that is to saye, to the asprenesse of his estate, for therfore is it called vertue, for that it susteyneth and enforceth by his strẽgthes, so that it nys not overcomen by aduersyteys. Ne certes thou that art put in encrease or in the heyght of vertue, ne hast not comen to fleten with delyces, and for to walken in bodily luste. Thou sowest or plantest a ful eygre batayle in thy corage ayenst euery fortune: For that the sorowfull fortune confoũde the not, ne that the mery fortune ne corrumpe the not, occuppe the meane by stedfaste strengthes. For all ꝑ euer is vnder the meane, or all that overpasseth the meane, dysplyketh wiekefulnesse, as who sayth, it is vycious, and ne hath no mede of his trauayle, for it is sette in your hande, as who sayethe, it lyeth in your power what fortune you is leuest, ꝑ is to say good or yuel, for al fortune ꝑ semeth sharpe or aspre, yf it ne exerceyse not the good folke, ne chastyse the wicked folke, it punysheth.

Bella bis binis operatus annis. Ulixes atrides phrigierunis &c.

The werker atrides, ꝑ is to sayn Agamenon, that wroughte and contynued the batayles by ten yere, recouered and purged in werkyng, by the distruction of Troye, the lost chambres of maryage in his brother, that is to saye, that Agamemnon wan ayen Heleyne, that was Menelaus wyfe, hys brother. In the meane while that thilke Agamemnon delyred to yeuen sayles to the grekes nauye, and brought ayen the windes by bloodes he vnclothed hym of pyte of father, and the folye prieste yeueth in sacrifyeng, the wretched cuttynge of the throte of the doughter, that is to say, that Agamemnon let cut the throte of his doughter by the prieste, to maken alyaunce with his goddes, and for to haue wynde, with whiche he might wenden to Troye. Itacus, that is to say Ulixes, bewepte his felowes folye, the whiche felowes the feirs Poliphemus lyggynge in his greate caue, had fretten and brent in his emptye wombe: But natheles Poliphemus woode for his blynd vysage yelde to Ulixes loye, by his sorowful teeres, that is to say, that Ulixes smote out ꝑ eye of Poliphemus, ꝑ stode in ꝑ forheed, for whiche

tulles had loye, whan he slowe Polyphemus
wordynge and blynde. Hercules is celebrable
for his harde trauayle, he daunted the proude
Centaurus, halfe horse halfe man, & byraste
the dispoylynge fro ꝑ cruel lyon, that is to say,
he slough the lyon, and byraft him his skinne.
He smote the byrdes that hyght Arpyes with
certayne arowes. He rauisshed apples fro the
wakynge dragon: and his hande was the more
brauy for the golden metall. He drough Cer-
berus the hounde of hel by the tripie chaines.
He ouercomer, as it is sayde, hath put an vn-
meke lord fodder to his cruel horse, that is to
say, Hercules slough Dyomedes, & made hys
horse to fetten him: and he Hercules sloughe
Idra the serpente, and bzente the venym. And
Achilleus the floode defouled in hys forhed,
dzeynt his shamefaste vilage in hys frondes,
that is to say, that Achilleus could transfigure
him selfe in to dyuers lykenes, & as he faught
with Hercules, at laste he tourned him in to a
bul, & Hercules drake one of hys hornes: and
he for shame hyd him in hys ryuer. And ouer
that he Hercules cast adown Antheus the gy-
aunt in the stroges of Lybie. And Cacus ap-
peysed the wzathes of Euander, that is to say
that Hercules slough the monster Cacus, and
apeysed with that deth the wzathe of Euan-
der. And ꝑ bzisted boze marked with bomes
the sholders of Hercules, the whych sholders
the hye ercle of heuen shulde thzyste. And the
last of his labours was, that he sustreyned the
heuen vpon his necke vndowed, and he deser-
ued ertsones the heuen to be ꝑ last ende of en
nayle. Gothe nowe than ye stronge men there
as the great ensample ledeth you. O nyce men
why make ye your backes, as who sayth: ye
sowe a delycate men, why se ye aduersyteꝛ,
and ne fight not ayenst hem by vertue, to win
nen the mede of heuen: for the mede ouerco-
men, pereth the sterres, that is to sayne, that
whan that erthely luste is ouercomen, a man
is maked wozthy to the heuen.

Here endeth the fourthe boke of Boece, and folowerh the fyfthe.

Dixerat, oratione[m]q; cursum ad alia quedã
structandã atq; expedirnda vertebat. B. Tum
ego, vera quidem inquam. &c.

he had sayd and tourned
the course of her tratio
to some other thynge,
to be treated and to be
sped. Bo. Than sayde I,
certes righteful is thyn
monestyng and ful
by auctozite. But ꝑ thou
saydest whilom, ꝑ the questiõ of the deuyne
puruiaunce, is enlaced with many other ma-
tyons, I vnderstande well and proue it, by
same thynge. But I aske, yf that thou wenest
that hap be any thynge in any wayes, and yf
thou wenest ꝑ hap be any thynge, what is it.
Philo. Than (quod she) I hast me to yelden
assoilen to the der of my behest, and to shewen
and open the way, by which way thou mayst
come ayen to thy countrer: but al be it so that
the thynges whiche ꝑ thou askest, ben right
profytable to knowe, yet ben they dyuers fro
what fro ꝑ path of my purpose, & it is to doute,
that thou ne be maked werry by mysse wayes,
so ꝑ thou ne mayst nat sufficse to measure ꝑ my
wayes. Bo. Ne doute the therof nothynge (quod
I). For to knowen thylke thinges togyder, of
the whiche thinges I delyte me greatly, that
shall ben to me in stede of rest, sythe it nys nat
to doutes of the thynges folowynge, whan ev-
ery thing of thy disputacion shall have ben
declared to me, by vndoutous sayth. Philo. Than
(sayd she) that maner woll I done to the, and
began to speaken ryghte thus. Certes (quod
she) yf any wyght desyrythe hap in thys ma-
ner, that is to sayn, ꝑ hap is bery dinge yzou-
ght for the by folythe mourynge, & by no ma-
trage of causes, I confirme that hap wys ry-
ght naught in no wyse, and I deme all ver-
ily, that hap nys, ne dwelleth but a boyer, as
who sayth, bug an yrell wozde, wythout any
signification of thing cõmitted to that boyer.
For what place might ben lefte oz dwellynge
in folye and to dysozdenaunce, sythe that god
leadeth and constrayneth al thinges by ozde,
for this sentence is bery sothe, that nothynge
hath his beinge of naughte, to the which sen-
tence, none of these olde folke ne withsayd ne-
uer, all be it so ꝑ they ne vnderstanden it nat,
by God, pzynce and begynner of wozkynge,
but they caston, as a maner foundemente of
subiecte material, that is to sayn, of the natu-
re of al reason. And if that any thyng is wro-
ght oz comen of no causes, than shall it seme, that
shilke thynge is comen oz woren of naught.
But if this ne may nat be done, than is it nat

gabyle that hap be anye luche thynge, as I haue defynyshed a lytel here before. Boece. Now shal it than be (qd I) nis there than no thyng that by ryght maye bene cleped eyther hap or eis aduenture or fortune: or is there ought, al be it so that it is hyd fro the people, as vnderthinge these wordes bene cournable? Philo. Wyne Aristotle (qd she) in the booke of hys phisyke, defynyssheth thys thynge by good reason, & nygh to the forth. B. In whych maner (qd I). P. As ofte (qd she) as men done any thyng for grace of any other thynge, and another thynge than thylke thynge that men entenden to done betydeth by some causes, it is cleped hap, right as a man dalue the erthe beause of tylynge of the felde, and founde there a gobet of golde bedolven, than wenen I thilke that it is befal him fortunous betydyng. But forsothe it nys nat of naught, for it hath his propre causes, of whiche causes ỳ course vnforseen & vnware, semeth to haue maked hap. For if ỳ tyller of ỳ felde ne dolue not in ỳ erthe, & if the hider of the gold ne had hyd the golde in that place, the golde ne had not bene foūde. These ben than the causes of ỳ abredgyng of fortuit hap, the which abredgynge of fortuit hap cometh, of causes of encountrynge & flowyng togider to hem selfe, & nat by ỳ entencyon of the doer. For neyther the hyder of the gold, ne ỳ deluer of the felde, (...) vnderstoden nat, ỳ the gold shuld haue ben foūde. But as I sayde, it betyd it ran togyder, ỳ he dalue there as ỳ other had hyd the gold. Now may I thus defynyshe hap. Hap is an vnware betydyng of causes, assembled in thynges that ben don for som other thyng. But thilke ordre ỳpordeyned by an vnchaungable betydyng togyder, which ỳ descendeth fro the wel of purueyaunce, that ordeineth al thynges in her places and in her tymes maketh, that the causes trinen and assemblen togyther.

Rapis Achemenes scopulis vbi bersa sequē tum, Pectoribus fugit spicula. &c.

IGris and Eufrates, resolue & springen of o well, in the cragges of the roche of ỳ coūtre of Achemenes, there as the the fleynge batayls fixen her dartes, returnynge in the brestes of hem that folowen hem. And soone after the same ryuers Tigris and Eufrates, vnioynen and departen her waters, and if they comen togider, and bene assembled and cleped togyder in to o course, thā moten thilke thynges fleten togider, whych that the water of the enterchaunginge floode bryngeth. The shippes and the stockes araced with the flode moten assemblen, and the waters ymedled, wrappeth or implyeth many fortunel happes or maners, the whiche wandryng happes natheles, thilke declinynge lowenesse of the erth, and the flowynge ordre of the slydyng water gouerneth. Wyt so fortune that semeth, as it suffreth with stanted or vngouerned brydles, it suffreth brydles, that is to sayn, to ben gouerned, & passeth by thilke lawe, that is to sayne, by the deuyne ordenaunce.

Animaduerto inquā, idq; vti tu dicis ita esse, conscrucio. Sed in hac perentium. &c.

THis vnderstande I well (quod I) and I accorde me that it is right as thou sayst. But I aske yf there be anye lyberte of free wyl in thys ordre of causes, that cleuen thus togider in hem selfe, or els I wolde wyten, yf that the deslynall cheyn constrayneth the mouynge of the courages of men. Philosophie. Yes (qd she) ther is lyberte of free wyl, ne ther ne was neuer no nature of reason, that it ne had liberte or free wyll. For euery thynge that may naturally vsen reason, it hathe dome, by whiche it determeth and demeth euery thyng. Than knoweth it by it selfe thynges that ben to flyen, and thinges that ben to desyren, and thylke thinge that any wight demeth to bē desyred, that asketh or desyreth he, & flyeth thilke thing that he troweth be to flyé. Wherfore in al thinges that reason is, in him also is lyberte of wyllynge and of nyllynge, but I ne ordeyne nat, as who sayth, I ne graūt nat, that this liberte be euen like in al thinges. For why in the soueraynes deuynes substaunces, that is to sayn, in spirites, ingement is more clere & wil nat corrumpe, & myghty redy to speden thynges that ben desyred. But ỳ soules of mē moten nedes bene more fre, whan they loken hem in the speculacyon or lokynge of the deuyne thought, and lasse free whan they slyden in to the bodyes, and yet lasse free whan they ben gadered togider & comprehēded in erthly membres, but the laste seruage, is whan that they ben yeuen to vices, & haue yfall from the possessyon of her propre reason. For after

that they haue cast away her eien fro the light of the souerayn sothfastnesse, to lowe thinges and darke, anone they darke by the clowde of ygnorawnce, and be troubled by felonous affections, to the which talentes whan they applyen hem and assenten, they wrappen and entrecasten the seruage wherche they haue loyned to hem selfe. And in this maner they ben captiues fro her propre lyberte, the whiche thing natheles the lokyng of the deuyne pourueyaunce seeth, that al thinges beholdeth & seeth fro eterne, & ordeyneth hem euerich in her merites, as they ben predestynate, & it is said in greke, that all thinges he seeth, and al thynges he heareth.

Puro clarum lumine phebum, Melliflui canis ore homerus &c.

HOmer with the hony mouthe, that is to sayne, Homer with the swete ditees singeth, that þ sunne is sene by pure lyght. Nathelesse yet ne may it not by the infirme lyght of his eyen, breken or percen the inwarde entrayles of the erthe, or eris of þ see. So ne seeth not god maker of the great world, to him þ loketh al thinges from an high, ne vnderstandeth not thinges by heuynesse of erthe, ne the night ne withstandeth not to him by the blacke clowdes, thylke god seeth in o stroke of thought al thinges that ben, weren, or shul come: and thilke god, for he loketh and seeth all thinges alone, thou maist sayne that he is the very sonne.

Tum ego: ren inquã difficilioze rursus ambiguitate confundoz. &c.

THan sayd I thus, nowe am I confounded by a more harde doute thã I was. Philosopia. What doute is that (quod she) for certes I coniecte nowe by suche thynges thou arte troubled.
Boece. It semeth (quod I) to repugnen and to contrarye greatlye, that God knoweth before al thinges, and that there is any fredom or liberte, for if so be that god loketh all thinges before, ne god ne may not ben deceyued in no maner. Than mote it nedes be, that all thynges the which that þ purueyaũce of god hath sene before to come, for whiche if that god knoweth tofore, not only the werkes of men, but also her counsayls and her wylles, than ne shall there be no liberte of arbytre, ne certes there ne may be nowe other dede, ne wyl, but thilke which that the deuyne purueyaunce (that ne may nat ben deceyued) hath ysed before, for if þ they mighten wenden any in other maner than they ben pursueyed, there ne should there be no certeyn prescience of thinges to comen, but rather an vncertayne opinion, the whiche thyng to wenen of god, I deme it felony and vnlefful. Or I ne prouue nat thylke same reason, as who sayth, I ne alowe nat, ne I ne prayse nat thilke same reason, by which that some men weenen þ they mowen assoyle and vnknytten the knotte of this questyon. For certes they seyn, that thing ays nat to amen, for that þ pursueyaunce of god hath seen before that it is to comen, but rather the contrary, and that is this, that for that þ thinges is to comen, that therfore ne maye it nat ben hyd fro the pursueyaunce of god. And in this maner this necessyte slydeth ayen in to the contrary party, ne it ne behoueth nat nedes, that thynges beriden that ben ypurueied, but it behoueth nedes that thynges that ben to comen ben ypurueyd, but as it were yrauayled, as who sayth that thilke answere procedeth nat as though men trauayleden or weren busy to enquyren, the which thig is cause of þ which thinges. As whether the prescience is cause of the necessyte of thynges to comen, or is that þ necessite of thinges to comen is cause of the purueyaunce. But I ne enforce me nat nowe to shewen it, þ the bestdynge of thynges is all before is necessarye, howe so or in what maner, þ the ordre of causes hath it selfe, al thoughe that it ne seme nat þ the prescyence wyng in necessyte of berydyng, to thinges to comen. For certes if that any wyghte sitteth, it behoueth by necessyte that the opinion be sothe of hym that coniecteth that he sytteth, and ayenwarde also is it of þ cõtrary, for if þ opinion be soth of any wight for þ he sytteth, it behoueth by necessyte that he syt. Than is here necessite in that one and in that other: for in þ one is necessyte of sytteyng, and certes in that other is necessyte of soth. But therfore ne sytteth nat a wyghte, for that the opynyon of the sytteynge is sothe, but the opynyon is rather soth for that a wight sitteth before. And thus al though that the cause of the soth cometh of that other syde, as who sayth, that although the cause of sothe cometh of the sytteynge, and

nat

nat of the trewe opinio, algates yet is there a comune neceſſite in that ones as in that other. Thus ſeeth it, that J may make ſemblable ſkiles of ꝑ purueyaunce of god, and of thynges to comen. For all thoughe ꝑ for that thynges ben to come, therfore ben they purueyed, and not certes for they ben purueyed, therfore ne berde they nat, natheleſſe it behoueth by neceſſyte, ꝑ eyther the thynges ꝑ to come ben ypurueyed of god, or els that the thynges ꝑ ben purueyed of god beryden. And this thynges onely ſuffyſeth ynoughe to deſtroyen the fredom of our arbytre, that is to ſayn, of oure fre will. But certes nowe ſheweth it wel how ferre fro the ſoth, and howe vp ſo down is thys tyrnge, that we ſeye that the berydyng of temporal thinges is cauſe of ꝑ certeine ꝓſcience. But for to wenen ꝑ god purueyeth the thynges to comen, for they bene to comen. What other thyng is it but for to wene, that thylke thinges ꝑ berde whilom, ben cauſes of thilke certayne purueyaunce that is in god. And here to adde J yet this thynges, that right as whi that J wote that a thyng is, it behoueth by neceſſyte that thilke ſelfe thyng be, and eke whan J haue knowen that anye thynge ſhall beryden ſo behoueth it by neceſſyte that thilke ſame thynges beryde. So foloweth it than, that the berydyng of ꝑ thinges yuy before ne may nat be eſchued, and at the laſt, if that any wight were a thig to ben otherwiſe than it is, it nys nat onely diſcreet, but it is deceyuable opinion, full dyuers and ferre fro the ſoth of ſcience. Wherfore if any thing be ſo to comen, that the berydynge of it ne be not certeyne ne neceſſary, who may weten before ꝑ thilke thinge is to comen. For right as ſcience ne may nat be medled wyth falſneſſe, as who ſayth, that if J wote a thyng, it ne may nat be falſe ꝑ J ne wote it, right of thilke thing that is conceyued by ſcience, ne maye not be none otherwyſe than as it is conceyued. for that is the cauſe why that ſcience wanteth leſing, as who ſaith, why that weteyng ne receyueth nat leſynge of that it wote, for it behoueth by neceſſyte that euery thyng be right, as ſcience cõprehendeth it to be. What ſhal J than ſayn, in which maner knoweth god before al ꝑ thynges to comen, if theyne be nat certeyne, for yf that he deme, ꝑ they ben to comen vnefchuably, and ſo may be that it is poſſyble ꝑ they ne ſhullen not comen, God is deceyued, but nat onely to trowen that god is deceyued, but for to ſpeke it with mouth, it is a frionous ſyme. But if that god wote, that right ſo as thinges bene to comen, ſo ſhullen thy ceymen, ſo that he wot egally, as who ſaith indifferētly, that thinges may be done, or els nat done. What is thilke preſcience that ne compzehendeth no certeine thing ne ſtable, or els what difference is there bytweene the preſcience of thylke jape worthy deuynynge of Tirelie deuynour, that ſayd. Al that J ſay (quod he) eyther it ſhal be, or els it ne ſhall nat be, or els howe moche is worth the deuyne preſcience more than the opynyon of mankynde, yf ſo be that it demeth the thynges vncerteyne, as men done. Of the whiche domes of men, the berydynge nys nat certeyne. But if ſo be, ꝑ none vncerteyne thynges ne may ben in him, that is righte certeyne wel of al thynges, than is ꝑ berydyng certeine of thilke thinges, which that he hath wyſt before ferneely to comen, for which it foloweth that the fredom of the counſayls & of the werkes of mãkynde nys none, ſyth ꝑ the thoughte of god that ſeeth al thinges without errour of falſneſſe, byndeth and conſtreyneth hem to a berydynge by neceſſyte. And if thys thyng be ones ygraunted and receyued, this is to ſain, that there nys no fre wil, than ſheweth it wel how great deſtructyon & howe greate domages there folowen of thynges of mãkinde, for in ydel ben there than purpoſed and behyghte medes to good folke and paynes to bad folk, ſythe that no mouynge of fre courage voluntary, ne hath not deſerued hem, that is to ſain neyther mede ne payn. And it ſhuld ſeme than that thilke thyng is alderworſt, which that is nowe demed for aldermoſt full & moſt ryghtfull. That is to ſayne, ꝑ ſhrewes bene punyſhed, or els that good folke be yguerdoned, ꝑ whiche folkes ſen that her ꝓpre wil ne ſent hem to that one, ne to that other. That is to ſayn, neyther to good ne harme, but conſtreyneth hem certeyn neceſſite of thinges to come, than ne ſhullen there neuer bene ne never weren vyce ne vertue, but it ſhullen rather be confuſyon of all deſertes medled without diſcreeyon. And yet there foloweth another inconuenience, of ꝑ which there ne may be thought no more felonous ne more wycked, and that is thus, that ſo as the ordre of thinges is vied & cometh of the purueyaunce of god, ne that no thyng nys lefull to the counſayls of mankinde, as who ſayth, ꝑ men haue no power to don nothig ne wyl nothig, than foloweth it ꝑ

but vices ben referred to ꝑ maker of al good, as who sayth, thā folowerth it ꝑ god ought to haue the blame of our vices, syth he constrayneth vs by necessyte to done vyces, than nys there no reason to hoopen in god ne to prayen to god, for what shulde any wyght hoopen to god, or why shulde he prayen to god, sith that the ordenaunce of destyne, which. that ne may nat ben enclyned, knytteth & streyneth al thynges that men may desyren. Than shulde there be don away thylke onely alyaunce bytwene god and man, that is to sayn, to hopen and to prayen. But by the pryce of right wysnesse & of very mekenesse, we deserven ꝑ guerdon of diuyne grace, which that is inestymable, that is to say, that is so great that it ne may not be ful prayed, & this is only ꝑ maner, that is to say, hope & prayers. For which it semeth that men wol speke with god, and by reson of supplycation bene conioyned to thylke eternesse, that nys nat approched no rather or that men seken it and impetren it. And if men ne were nat ꝑ hope ne prayers, ne haue no strengthes by the necessyte of thinges to comen retched, what thing is ther than, by which we mowē ben cōioyned & cleren to thilke soueravn price of thiges. For which it behoueth by necessitte that the lygnage of mankynde, as thou songe a lytel here beforn, be departed and vnioyned from his wele, and fayen of his begynnynge, that is to sayne god.

Que nam discors federa rerum, Causa resolvit: quis tanta deus: &c.

What discordable cause hath to trete and vnioyned the byndig or the alyaunce of thynges, that is to sayne, the coniunctyons of god and of man: which god hath established so greate batalle bytwene these two sothfaste or verye thinges, that is to sayn, bytwene the purueyaunce of god and fre wyl, that ben lynguler & deuided, ne that they ne wolē nat ben medled ne coupled togider. But there nis no discorde eō the very thynges, but they clerken alwaye certayne to hem selfe. But the thought of mā confounded & ouerthrowen by the darke mēbres of ꝑ body, ne may nat by fyre of his darked lokyng, that is to sayn, by the vigour of his inlight, while ꝑ soule is in ꝑ body, knowē the syn subtel knyttynges of thynges. But wherfore eschaufferth it so by so great loue, & fynden thylke notes of soth prouered, that is to sayne, wherfore eschaufferth the thought of man by so great desyre, to knowe thilke ramifications that ben yhyd vnder the couertures of soth. wote it ought thilke thiges that it desyreth to knowe. As who sayth nay. For no man ne trauayleth for so wetten thiges ꝑ he wote. And therfore ꝑ terme sayth thus. But who trauayleth to weten thynges yknowe, and if that he ne knoweth hem nat, what serueth thilk blynde thought. what is he ꝑ desyreth any thiges, of which he wot right naught. As who sayth, who so desyreth any thynges, nedes somwhat he knoweth of it, or els he ne coude nat desyrē it. Or who may folowe thynges that ne ben nat y wist, & though that he seke the thynges, where shall he fynde hem & what wyght that is al vncomyng and ygnorant maye knowe ꝑ for me ꝑ is ylombe. But whan the soule beholdeth & seeth the thought, ꝑ is to sayne god, thā anoweth it to gyder the some & singularites, that is to sain, the principles, & euerych of hem by him selfe. But now whyle the soule is byd in the clowde & in the darknesse of the mēbres of the bodye, it ne hath not all forgeten it selfe, but it wytholdeth the summe of thynges, and lefyth the syngularites. Than who so that seketh sothnesse, he nys in neyther nother habyte, for he woot not all, ne he ne hath nat all forgeten, but yet hym remembreth the sūme of thiges that he withholdeth, and asketh counsayle, and retreateth depyth thinges plene beforn, that is to sayne, the great sūme in his minde, so that he mowe adden the parties that he hath forgeten to thilke parties that he hath withholden.

Tum illa. Vetus inquit, hec est de prouidencia querela: Marcoꝫ Tullio. &c.

Than said she, this is (quod she) the olde questyon of the purueyaūce of god. And Marcus Tullius whan he deuyded the deuinacions, that is to sayne, in his bookes that he wrote of deuinacios, he moued greatly this question, & ꝑ thy selfe hast ythought it moch, & vtterly and long, but yet ne hath it nat bē determined ne isped fermely & diligently of any of you, & the cause of this darknes & of this difficultes, for

that

that the moyynge of the reason of mankynde ne maye not mouen to, that is to sayn applien or ioynen to the simplicite of ꝑ diuine prescyence, the which simplicite of the diuine prescience, if ꝑ mē myghten thynkē it in any maner. That is to sayne, ꝑ yf men myghten thynke & vnderstanden the thynges ꝑ god seeth hym self, than there dwelled vtterly no doute, ꝑ which reason & cause of dyffycultees, I shall assaye at last to shewe & to speden whan I haue first ypended & answerred to thy resons, by which thou art moued, for I aske why thou weneſt ꝑ thylke resons of hem ꝑ alloyē thys questiō ne bee nat spedfull ynoughe ne sufficyent, the whiche solucyon or the whiche reason, for that it demeth, that the prescience is not of ne certeyn of thynges to come, as who sayth, any other way than thus, but that thilke thinges that the prescience wote before, ne may not vnbetyden, that is to sayne, that they moten betyde. But than, if that prescience ne putteth none necessyte to thynges to comen, as thou thy self hast confessed it and beknowe a litel here before, what cause or what is it, as who sayth, there may no cause be, by whyche that the endes voluntary of thynges myghten be cōstrayned to certayn betidyng. For by grace of polycion, so that thou maye the better vnderstande this that foloweth, I suppose that there ne be no prescience: Thā aske I (qō she) in as muche as apertayneth to that, shulden than thynges that comen of free wyll be constrayned to betydyng by necessyte. Bo. Naye (quod I) Phi. Than ayenwarde (qō she) I suppose that there be prescience, but that it ne putteth no necessyte to thynges, than trow I that thylke same fredome of wyl shal dwellē all hole and absolute, and vnbounden. But thou wylte sayne, that all be it so that prescyence nys not cause of the necessite of betyding to thynges to comen, algates yet it is a signe that the thynges ben to betyden by necessyte. By this maner than although ꝑ prescience had neuer be, yet algates or at lest way, it is certē thing that endes of betidiges of thiges to comen shulden be necessarye. For euery thynge sheweth and signifieth onely what the thinge is, but it ne maketh not the thyng that it signifieth. For whiche it behoueth fyrst to shewe that nothyng ne betydeth, that it ne betydeth by necessite: so that it may apere that the prescience is signe of necessite: or els if there nere no necessyte, certes thilke prescience ne might not be signe of thing that hys not. But certes it is nowe certayne, that ꝑ proue of thys ysustreyned by stedfast reason, ne shal not ben lad ne proued by sygnes ne by argumentes, takē fro without, but by causes conuenable and necessarye. But thou mayst sayne, howe maye it be that the thynges ne betyden not, that bē purueyed to comen. But certes ryght as we trowen that the thynges, which that the pursueyaunce wote before, to comen ne be not to betyden. But that ne shoulde we not demen, but rather although they shall betyden, yet ne haue they no necessite of her kinde to betiden: and this mayst thou lyghtly aperceyuen by thys that I shall sayne. For we sene manye thynges whē they ben before our eyen, right as men sene the carter worthyng in the tournyng & in the attempryng or a dressing of his carres or chariotes, & by this maner, as who sayth, mayst thou vnderstande of all other werkemen. Is ther thā any necessite, as who sayth in our loking, that constrayneth or compelleth any of thylke thynges to ben done so. Boece. Naye (quod I) for in ydell & in vayne were al the effecte of crafte, if that al thinges weren moued by constrenynge of oure eyen or of our syght. Philoso. The thynges than (quod she) that whan that men done hem, ne haue no necessyte that men done hem, eke tha same thinges first or they be done, they ben to comen without necessyte: For why there ben some thynges to betyden, of which the endes and the betydynges of hem ben absolute and quite of all necessyte. For certes I ne trowe not that any man wolde sayne thys, that the thynges ꝑ men done nowe, that they ne were to betyden first, er they were done. And thilke same thynges, although men hadden wyste hem before, yet they haue frē betidinges. For right as science of thinges prestē ne bringeth in no necessite to thynges that men don, right so to the prescience of thynges to comen, ne bringeth in none necessite to thynges to betyden. But thou mayst sayn, that of thilke same it is douted, as whether that of thylke thynges, that ne haue none issues and betydynges necessaryes, if therof may ben any prescience. For certes they semen to discorden, for thou weneſt that yf that thynges ben sene before that necessyte foloweth hem, and yf necessyte fayleth hem, they ne mizt not ben wist before, and that nothyng maye be comprehended by sciēce but certayn. And if tho thynges ne haue

no certayn bethinges, be putteyed as certayn it shulde be certaynesse of opinion, not sothfastnesse of sciẽce. And thou weenest ꝑ it be diuers fro ꝑ holynesse of science, that any man shulde deme a thing to be otherwise than it is it self, and the cause of this errour is, that of al the thynges, that euery wyght hath knowe, they weene that the thynges ben knowe only by ꝑ strengthe & by the nature of the thynges that ben wyst oꝛ knowe, and it is al the contrary: foꝛ al that euer is knowe, it is rather comprehended and know, nat after his strength and his nature, but after the faculty̌e, that is to sayne, the power and the nature of hem that knowen. And foꝛ that this thynge shuld now shewe by a shoꝛte ensample the roundnesse of a bodye, otherwyse than the syght of the eye knoweth it, & otherwyse than the touchynge. The lokyng, by castyng of his beames, wayeth & seeth from a ferre al ꝑ bodye togyther, without mouyng of it self, but the touchyng cleaueth to the rounde bodye, and moueth aboute the enuyꝛonnynge, and comprehendeth the parties by roundenesse, and the man hym self otherwise beholdeth him, & otherwayes ymaginacyon, and otherwyse reason, & otherwyse intelygence: foꝛ the wytte comprehendeth without foꝛth the fygure of the body of man, that is stablyshed in the mater subiecte. But the ymagynacyon comprehendeth only the fygure without the mater. Reson surmounteth ymagynacion, and comprehendeth by vniuersal lokynge the cõmune spethe, but the eye of intelligẽce is higher, foꝛ it surmõnteth the enuyꝛonnyng of the vniuersyte, & loketh ouer that, by pure subtylite of thought. Thylke same symple fourme of man, that is perdurable in the diuyne thought, in whyche this ought greatly to be considred, ꝑ the hiest strength foꝛ to comprehenden thinges, embraseth and contayneth the lower strengthe, but the lower strength ne ariseth not in no maner to the hyer strengthe. Foꝛ witte ne may comprehẽde nothyng out of mater, ne ꝑ imagination ne loketh not the vniuersal spreces, ne reason ne taketh noꝛ the symple fozme, so as intelygence taketh it. But intelygence that loketh al abouen, when it hath comprehẽded ꝑ fourme, it knoweth & demeth all the thynges that ben vnder ꝑ fozme, but she knoweth hem in thylke maner, in whyche it comprehendeth thylke same symple fozme, that ne may neuer be knowen of none of ꝑ other, that is to saye, to none of the thre foꝛsayde strengthes of the soule, foꝛ it knoweth the vniuersyte of reason and the fygure of ymaginacion, & the sensible materiall cõceyued by wit, ne it ne vseth not ne of reason, ne of ymagynacyon, ne of wytte without foꝛth, but it beholdeth al thinges, as I shall say, by a stroke of thought fermely without discours of collacion. Certes reason whã it loketh any thyng vniuersal, it ne vseth not of ymagination ne wytte, and algates yet it comprehendeth the thynges ymaginable & sensyble, foꝛ reason is she that definisheth the vniuersal of her conceyte ryght thus: Man is a resonable two foted beest, and howe so that this knowynge is vniuersal, yet nys there no wight that ne wot wel that a man is a thing ymaginable and sensyble, and this same consydereth wel reason, but that nys nat by ymagynacyon, noꝛ by wyt, but it loketh it by resonable conceꝛpcion. Also ymagynacion, al be it so that it taketh of wytte the begynnyng, to sene & foꝛmen the fygures, algates although that wytte ne were not ꝑsent, yet it enuyꝛonneth & comprehendeth al thinges sẽsible, not by reason sensyble of demyng, but by reason ymagynatiue. Seest thou not than that al the thynges in knowing vsen moꝛe of her faculte oꝛ of her power, than they done of the faculte oꝛ power of thinges that ben to knowen, ne ꝑ is no wrong, foꝛ so as euery ingement is:) bede oꝛ doynge of hym, that demeth, it behoueth euery wight perfoꝛme his werke & his entẽte not of foꝛain power, but of his ꝓpꝛe power.

Quondam poꝛticus attulit. Obscuros nimium sruces &c.

Than the poꝛche, that is to saye, a gate of the town of Athenes, there as philosophers hadde congregacyon to dyspute, thylke poꝛche brought somtyme olde men full derke in her sentences, that is to saye philosophers, that hyghten stoiciens, that wende that ymages & sensibilites, ꝑ is to say, sẽsible ymaginacions oꝛ eis ymaginacions of sensible thinges, wer empꝛinted in to soules fro bodies wourforth, as who sayth, thylke stoiciens wenden ꝑ the soule had be naked of him self, as a mirrour oꝛ a cleane perchemyne, so that all fygures musten strike comen fro thynges fro without in to soules, and ben empꝛynted in to soules

ryght

wyte as we ben woute sometyme by a swifte
pentel to fyxe letters emprynted in ꝑ smoth-
nesse of the playnesse of the table of waxe,
or in the parchemyne, that hath no fygure ne
mete in it. Glose. But now̄e argueth Boece
ageynste that opynion, and sayethe thus: But
sithe thynking soule ne vnpryseth nothynge
that is to sayne, ne doth thyng by the pro-
nouncyng, but suffreth and hath [illegible]
fygures and nothe notes of bodyes without-
forth, ayrideth ymages ryght, ryght & playne,
in the maner of a myrrour. Whence thynketh
that of whens cometh thilke knowing in our
soule, that discerneth and beholdeth al thyn-
ges, and whence is thilke strength that behol
deth the synguler thynges, or els whence is ꝑ
strength that beuldeth thynges ynowe, and
thilke strength that gadereth togyther thyn
ges beuldes, and strength that choseth the en-
trechaūged wayes: for sometyme it heaueth the
herd, that is to say, that it heaueth vp the en-
tencion to ryght hygh thynges, and sometyme
it bitendeth in to right lowe thynges, & whā
it retourneth in to hym selfe, it reproueth and
distroyeth the false thynges by the true thin-
ges. Certes this strength is cause moze effy-
cient and muche moze myghty, to sene and to
knowen thynges, than thylke cause that suf-
freth and receyueth the notes and fygures im
pressed in maner of mater. Algates the passy-
on, that is to say, the suffraunce or the wit in
the quicke body gothe before exteynge, & mo-
uing the strēgthes of the thought, right so as
whan that clerenesse smyteth the eyen, & mo-
ueth hē to sene, or ryght so as voyce or sown
hasteth to the eeres, & cōmoueth hem to her
ben, than is the strengthe of the thought mo-
ued & excited, clepeth forth to semblable mo-
uinges the speces that it haue within it selfe,
and adderth the speces to the notes, and to
thinges without forth, and medleth the yma-
ges of thinges withoutforth, to thynges hyd
within hym selfe.

Quod si in corporibus sentiendis quam-
uis efficiant instrumenta sensuum. &c.

But what is that in bodyes to be
feled, that is to say, in the takyng
& in the knowyng of bodily thyn-
ges. And all be it so that the qua-
lytees of bodyes ꝑ be obiecte fro
without forth, mouen & extalenten the instru-
menters of the wittes, and al be it so that the
passyon of the bodye, that is to sayne, the wyt
or the suffraunce goeth before the strēgth or
the worthynge corage, the whiche passyon or
suffraūce clepeth forth the dede of ꝑ thought
in it self, and moueth & exciteth in this meane
whyle, ꝑ fourmes that resten within forth, &
insensible bodies, as I haue sayd, our corages
nys not taught or empryntes by passion to
know these thiges, but demeth & knoweth of
his owne strength ꝑ passion or suffraūce, sub-
iect to the body: moch moze than tho thynges
ben absolute and quicke fro al talentes or af-
feccyons of bodyes, as god or hys angels, ne
folowen not in discerning thinges obiecte fro
without forthe, but they accomplythen and
speden the dedes of her thought. By this rea-
son than there comen manye maner of kno-
wynges to dyuers and to differynge substan-
ces. For the witte of the body, the which wit
is naked and dispoyled of al other knowing,
thylke witte cometh to beestes, the whiche ne
mowen not mouen hem selfe here and there,
as oysters and muskels, and other such shel-
fyshe of the see, that cleuen & ben nourished to
rockes, but the ymaginacyon cometh of re-
muable beestes, that semen to haue talent to
flyen or to desyren any thynge: But reason is
alonelye the synage of mankynde, ryght as
intellygence is alonely the dyuyne nature, of
whiche it foloweth, that thylke knowyng is
moze worthe than is eyther, sens it knoweth
by his proper nature nat only his subiect, as
who sayth, it ne knoweth not alonly that ap-
pertayneth properly to hys knowynge, but it
knoweth ꝑ subiectes of al other knowinges.
But how shal it than be, yf that witte & yma-
gynacyon stryuen ayen reasonynge, and sayne
that of thylke vniuersall thynge that reason
weneth to sene, that it nys ryght naught, for
wytte and ymaginacyon sayne, that that is
sensyble or ymagynable, it ne may not ben vni-
uersall. Than is there eyther the iugement of
reason sothe, ne that there nys nothyng sensy-
ble, or els for that reson wote wel, that many
thynges ben subiecte to wyt and to ymagy-
nacyon: than is the concepcion of reson bayue
and false, whiche that loketh and comprehen-
deth, that that is sensyble & synguler, as vni-
uersall. And yf that the reason wold answere
ayenst these two, that is to say, to wytte and
ymagynacyon, & saye that sothly she her selfe
that is to sayn reason, loketh and comprehen-
deth by

deth by reason of vniuersalite, both that that is sensible, and that that is ymagynable, and thylke two, that is to sayne, wytte & ymagynacyon, ne mowen not stretchen hem selfe to the knowyng of vniuersalyte, for that the knowyng of hem ne may not exceden ne surmounten þ bodily figures. Certes of the knowing of thynges men oughten rather yeuen more credence to the more stedfaste and to the more perfyte iugemente in thys maner stryuynge, than we that haue strengthe of reasonyng and of ymagynacion, and of wytte, that is to say, by reason and by ymagination, we wolde rather prayse the cause of reson, as who sayth, than the cause of wytte and of ymagynacion. Semblable thyng is it, that the reson of mánkynde ne weneth nat that the diuyne intelligẽce, beholdeth or knoweth thinges to come, but right as the reason of mánkinde knoweth hem: for thou arguyst thus, that if that it ne seme not to men, that some thynges haue certayne betydynges, they ne may not be wyste before certainly to betyden, and than is there no prescience of thylke thynges, & yf we trow that prescience be in these thinges, thã is there nothynge that betydeth by necessyte. But yf we myght haue the iugemente of the diuyne thought, as we ben parteners of reson, right so as we haue demed, þ it behoueth by ymagynacion and wytte, & beneth reason, right so wold we demé that it wer ryghtful thing, that mans reason ought to submyt it selfe to be beneth the diuine thought, for which if we may, as who sayth, that if we may I coũsaile that we enhaũce vs in the height of thilke soueraine intelligence, for ther shal reason wel sene that þ it ne may not beholde in it selfe, & certes that is thus, in what maner the prescience of god seeth althinges and byfyndeth, al though they haue no certayne betydinges: ne this is none opinion, but rather the simplicite of the soueraine science, that is not shette with in no maner of boundes.

Quam variis terras animalia permeant figuris. Namq; alia exerto sunt corpore. &c.

The beestes passen by the erthes by sundryers figures, for some of hé haue her bodyes straught, & creepen in the duste, & drawé after hem a trace or a forough continued, that is to saye, as nedres & snayles, and other beestes, by the wandring lightnesse of her wynges beaté the windes, & some swimmen the spates of þ longe ayre, by meanes flyeng. And other beestes gladen hem selfe, to byggen her traces or her steppes in the erthe with her goyeng or with her fete, and to goon eyther by the grene feldes, or els to walké under the woodes. And al it be so that thou seest that they discorden by diuers fourmes, algates her faces enclyned beau[illegible]ed her bodyes, only the lynage of man beareth bryght his hie herd, & stãdeth light with his vpright body, & beholdeth the erthes vnder him. But but if thou erthly man wayest yuel out of thy witte, this figure amoneseth, the that afore the heué with thy right visage, shuld arryse thy forheed to beaten vp on hyghthy courage, so þ thy thought ne be not beuyed ne put low vnder foot, syth þ thy body is so high stretched.

Quoniam igitur dei paulo ante monstratũ est, omne quod scitur. &c.

Therfore thã, as I haue shewed afore here before, þ al thyng that is wyste vys not knowen by his nature propre, but by the nature of hem that cõprehenden it. Let vs loken now we, in as muche as it is lefull to vs, as who sayth, let vs loken nowe as we may, which þ is the estate of þ diuine substaũce, so þ we may wel knowe eke what his sciẽce is. The cõmune iugement of al creatures reasonables thã is, that god is eterne. Let vs clydze than what is eternyte, for certes þ shal shewen vs togyder the diuine nature and the diuyne science. Eternite than is perfyte possessyon, and al togyther of lyfe interminable, and that sheweth the more clerely by the comparyson or collacyon of temporall thynges. For al thyng that liueth in tyme, it is present, and procedeth fro preteritees in to futures, þ is to sayne, from tyme passed in to tyme comynge: ne there nys nothynge establyshed in tyme, that may embracen togyder al the space of thys life, for certes yet ne hath it not taken the time of to morowe, and it hath lost that of yester daye. And certes in the life of thys day, ye ne lyuen no more, but right as in this mouable and transitorie moment. Than thylke thynge that sufferth temporall condicion, al though þ it neuer began to be, ne thought it neuer cease to be (as aristoteles demed of þ worlde) and although þ lyfe of it be stretched with infynite of tyme, yet algates nys it no

like thynge, as men might trowen by right that it is eterne. For al thoughe that it comprehende and embrace the space of the life infinite, yet algates ne embraceth it not ꝑ space of the lyfe al togyther, for it ne hathe not the futures that be not yet: Ne it ne hath no lenger the preteritees ꝑ ben done or passed. But thilke thyng than, that hath and comprehendeth togyder al the plente of the life interminable, to whom there ne fayleth nought of the future, & to whom there nys naught of ꝑterite escaped or passed, thilke same is ywitnessed and proued by right to ben eterne. And it behoueth by necessyte that thilke thyng be alway presente to him self, and competent, as who sayth, alway present to him selfe, and so mighty, that al be right at hys plesaunce, and that he haue al present ꝑ infynite of the mouable tyme. Wherfore some men trowen wrõg fullye, that whan they herden that it semed to Plato, that this worlde had neuer be gynning of tyme, that it neuer shal haue fayleyng: they were in thilke maner, that this worlde be made eterne, wt hys maker, as who sayth, they wene that this worlde and god be maked together eterne. And ꝑ is a wrongfull wenyng, for other thing it is to be lad̃e by the lyfe interminable, as Plato graũted to the worlde, and other thinge it is to embrace togyther, al the presence of the lyfe that is interminable, which thynge is clere and manifest to the dyuyne thought. Ne it ne shulde not seme to vs that god is elder than thinges that be maked by quantite of time, but rather by the proprete of hys symple nature. For thys like infynite mouynges of tẽporal thynges foloweth this presentary estate of this life immouable, and so as it ne maye not cõtrefeten ne fayne it, ne be euenlyke to it for the immobilyte, ꝑ is to saye, that is in the eternyte of god, it fayleth & fayleth in to mouyng fro the simplicite of the presẽce of god, & disencreaseth in the infynite quãtite of future and preterite. And so as it maye not haue togyder al the plentye of the lyfe, algates yet for as much as it ceaseth neuer for to ben in some maner, yet it semeth sondrie to vs, that it followeth & resembleth thilke thyng, that it ne may not attayne to ne fulfyllen, and byndeth it selfe to some maner presence of this lytel moment: the which presence of thys lytell and swyfte moment, for ꝑ it beareth a maner ymage or lykenesse of the eye dwellyng of god: it graũteth to such maner thynges, as it betydeth to, that it semeth hem, as these thynges haue ben, and ben. And for that the presence of suche lytel moment ne may not dwell, therfore it ranyshed and tooke infynite waye of tyme, ꝑ is to saye, by successyon, and by thys maner it is done, for that it shuld continue the lyfe in goyng, of ꝑ whiche lyfe it ne might not embrace the plentie of dwellyng. And for thy if we wollen put worthy names to thynges ꝑ folowen Plato, let vs saye than sothlye, that God is eterne, and ꝑ the worlde is perpetuel. Than sythe euery iugement knoweth & comprehendeth by hys owne nature, thynges that ben subiecte vnto hym, there is to god alwayes an eterne and a presentarye estate. And the syence of hym that ouerpasseth all tempozall moment, dwelleth in symplicite of hys presence, and embraseth and consydereth all the infynite spaces of tymes preteritees, and of tymes futures. And loketh in hys symple knowynge al thynges of preterite, ryght as they weren don presently ryght nowe. If thou wolte than thynken & aduyse the prescience, by whiche it knoweth al thinges, thou ne shalt not demen it as prescience of thiges to comen, but thou shalt demen more ryghtfully that is science of presence or of instaunce that neuer ne fayleth, for whiche it nys not ycleped prouydence, but it shuld rather be̅ cleped purueyaũce, whiche is established ful ferre fro ryght low thynges, & beholdeth from a ferre al thinges, ryght as it were fro the hye hyght of thynges. Why askest thou than, or why disputest thou thanne, that thilke thinges ben don by necessyte, whiche that ben ysene & yknowen by the diuine syght, sith ꝑ forsoth men ne maken nat thilke thynges necessary, whiche that they sene ben don in her syght, for addeth thy beholdynge any necessite, to thilke thiges which thou beholdest present? Boe. Naye (quod I) Philo. Certes (qõ she) than, yf men mighten maken any digne compariſon or collacion of the presence dyuyne, and of the presence of mankinde: right so as ye sene some thinges in this tempozal presence, right so seeth god al thing by his eterne presence. Wherfore this diuine prescience ne chaungeth not the nature of the propertie of thinges, but beholdeth such thinges present to him warde, as they shulden be tyden to you warde in tyme to comen. Ne it ne confoũdeth not the iugement of thynges, but by one syght of hys thought he knoweth

the

the thinges to comen, as wel necessary as not necessarye. Right so whan ye seue togyther a man walke on the erthe, and the sonne aryse in the heuen, al be it so that ye sene al togither that one and that other: yet neuertheles ye deme and discerne, that that one is voluntary, and that other is necessary: Right so than the deuine lokynge, beholding al thynges vnder hym, ne troubleth nat the qualite of thinges that ben certeynly present to hym warde, but as to the condicion of tyme, forsoth they ben future, for whiche it foloweth, þ this nys none opynyon, but rather a stedfaste knowyng pstengthed by sothnesse, that whan þ god knoweth any thynge to be, he ne vnwote nat that thilke thyng wanteth necessite to be, this is to sayn, that whan that god knoweth any thing to betyde, he wote wel þ it ne hath no necessyte to betyde. And yf thou seyst here that thilk thing that god seeth to betyde, it ne may nat vnbetyde, as who sayth he it mote betyde, and thilke thinge that ne may nat vnbetyde, it mote betiden by necessite, I that thou streyn me to this name of the necessite. Certes I wyl wel confessen and beknowen a thynge of ful sad trouthe, but hit neth shal there anye wight mowe sene it or come thereto, but yf þ he be beholder of þ diuine thought, for I wil answere the thus, that thilke thing that is future, whē it is referred to þ diuine knowing, than it is necessarye. But certes whan it is vnderstanden in his owne kynde, men sene it vtterly fre and absolute fro al necessyte. For certes there ben two maners of necessitees, that one necessyte is simple, as thus, þ it behoueth by necessite that al men be mortal or deedlye. Another necessyte is condycyonel, as thus, yf thou woost that a mā walketh, it behoueth by necessyte that he walke, thilke thing than that any wight hath yknowe to be, it ne maye nat be none otherwyse than he knoweth it to be. But this condicion ne drageth not with her thylk necessyte simple, for certes this necessite condicionel, the propre nature of it ne maketh it nat, but the adiection of the condycyon maketh it. For no necessyte ne constrayneth a mā to gon, that goth by his proper wil, al be it so that whan he goth, that it is necessary that he goth. Right on this same maner than, yf that the purueyaunce of god seeth any thyng present, than mote thylke thyng ben by necessyte, al thoughe that it ne haue no necessyte of his owne nature. But certes the futures that ben tyden by fredom of arbitrie, god seeth hem al togyther present. These thinges thā if they be referred to the dyuine sight, thā ben they maked necessarye by the condicion of the dyuine knowyng. But certes, yf thylke thynges ben considred by hem selfe, they been absolute of necessyte, and ne folowen not, ne cessen not of the lyberte of her owne nature. Than certes without dout al the thinges whiles ben ben, which that god wote before that they ben comen and betyden of fre arbitrie, or of fre wyll, that al be it so that they betyden, yet algates ne lese they not her proper nature in betynge, by the whiche first or they weren done, they hadden power not to haue betydde. Bo. What is this to sayne than (qō I) that thynges ne be not necessary by her proper natur, so that they comē in a certeyn maners in the likenesse of necessyte, by condicion of the diuine science? Philo. This is the differrence (qō he) that tho thynges whiche þ I purposed her a lytel here before, that is to sayne, sonne arysynge, and the man walkynge, þ therwyles þ thylke thynges ben done, they ne myght not ben vndoone. Natheles that one of hem or it was done, it behoueth by necessite that it was doone, but not that other. Right so it is here that the thinges whiche þ god hath present, withouten doute they shullen ben, but some of hem discendeth of the nature of thynges, as the sonne arysynge, and some discendeth of the power of the doers, as the mannes walkynge. Boece. Than sayd I, no wronge, that if these thinges be referred to the diuine knowynge, than ben they necessarye, and yf they ben considred by hem selfe, than ben they absolute fro the bonde of necessyte. Right so as al thynges that apereth or sheweth to the wittes, if thou referre hem to reason it is vniuersal, and if thou loke it or refer it to it selfe, than is it singuler. But nowe if thou saydest thus, that if that it be in my power to chaungen my purpose, than shal I beyden the pureyaunce of god, whan peraventure I shall haue chaunged the thynges whiche þ he knoweth before. Philo. Than shall I answeren the thus: Certes thou maiste wel chaūge thy purpose, but for as moche as the presentē sothnesse of the diuine pureyaūce beholdeth that thou mayste chaunge thy purpose, and whether thou chaunge it or no, and whyderward that thou tourne it, thou ne mayste not eschue the dyuine presience: right so thou ne mayste

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not fro the fyght of the preſent eye, although that thou tourne thy ſelfe by thy fre wyl in to diuers actions. But thou mayſte ſayne ayen to this thus: Howe ſhall it than be, ſhal not ꝑ diuyne ſcience ben chaunged by my diſpoſycion, whan that I wyll one thyng nowe, and nowe another thyng? And thilke preſcience ne ſemeth it not to entrechaunge ſtoũdes of knowynge, as who ſeyth, ne ſhal it not ſemen to vs, that the diuine preſcience entrechaungeth his diuers ſtoundes of knowynge, ſo that it knowe ſomeyme one thynge, and ſomtyme it knoweth the contrary of that thynge? Philo. Noforſothe (quod ſhe) for the diuyne fyght renneth before and ſeeth all the futures, and ceyeth hem ayen, and retourneth hem to the propre preſcience of his propre knowyng, ne he entrechaungeth not, ſo as thou weneſt the ſtoundes of his forknowyng, as nowe this, nowe that: but he dwellynge aye cometh before, and embraſeth at o ſtroke all the muta-cions. And thys preſcience to comprehenden and to ſene al thinges, god ne hath not taken it of the berydinges of thynges to comen, but of his propre ſymplicite. And herby is alloy-ed thilke thiges that thou putteſt a litel here before, that is to ſayne, that it is vnworthy thyng to ſayn that our futures yeuen cauſe of the preſcience of God. For certes [illegible]ngth of the diuyne ſcience, whiche that enbraſeth al thinges by his preſentary knowyng, eſtabliſ-ſheth maner to all thynges, and it ne oweth not to latter thynges. And ſithe ꝑ theſe thyn-ges ben thus, that is to ſaine, that neceſſite is not in thynges by the diuyne preſcience, than is there fredom of arbytrie that dwelleth hole and vnwemmed to mortal men, ne the lawes ne pourpoſen not wycked medes and paynes to the wyllinges of men, that ben vnbounden and quite of all neceſſyte: And God beholder and forewete of al thynges dwelleth aboue, and the preſente eternite of fyght, renneth al-waye wyth the diuers qualyte of our dedes, diſpenſyng or ordeynyng medes to good me, and tourmẽtes to wicked men. Ne in ydell ne in vayne ben there not put in god hope and prayers, that ne mowen not ben vnſpedeful, ne without effecte, whan they ben rightfull.

Wythſtande than and eſchewe thou vyces, worſhyppe and loue thou vertues, areyſe thy corage to ryghtfull hopes, yelde thou humble prayers and hyghe. Greate neceſſyte of pro-weſſe and of vertue is encharged and com-maunded to you if ye wyll not diſſimulen, ſyth that ye wetchen and doone, that is to ſayne, your dedes and youre werkes before ꝑ eyen of the iuge, that ſeeth and alſo that demeth al thynges. Deo gracias.

¶ Thus endeth the boke of Boecius of the conſolacion of Philoſophie, and hereafter foloweth the dreame of Chaucer.

¶ The dreame of Chaucer

THaue greate wonder by thys lyght
Howe I lyue, for daye ne nyght
I maye not ſlepe, wel my nought
I haue ſo many an ydle thought
Purely for defaute of ſlepe
That by my trouth, I take no kepe
Of nothyng, howe it cometh or gothe
Ne me nys nothyng leſe nor lothe
Al is ilyche good to me
Joye or ſorowe, where ſo it be
For I haue feleynge in nothyng
But as it were a maſed thyng
Alday in poynte to fal adoun
For ſorowfull ymagination
Is alway wholy in my mynde
And wel ye wote, agaynſt kynde
It were to lyuen in this wyſe
For nature wolde not ſuffyſe
To none erthly creature
Not longe tyme to endure
Without ſlepe, and be in ſorowe
And I ne may, ne nyght ne morowe
Slepe, and this melancolye
And drede I haue for to dye
Defaute of ſlepe and heuyneſſe
Hath ſlayne my ſpirite of quickeneſſe
That I haue loſt all luſtyheed
Suche fantaſyes ben in myne heed
So I not what is beſt to do
But men might aſke me why ſo
I may not ſlepe, and what me is

But nathelesse, who alke this
Letterly his althyng trewly
Why I slepen can not tel why
The sothe, but trewly as I gesse
I holde it be a syckenesse
That I haue suffred this eyght yere
And yet my boote is neuer the nere
For there is phisycien but one
That may me heale, but that is done
Alle we ouer bntyl efte
That wyl not be, mote nedes be lefte
Our first mater is good to kepe
So whan I sawe I might not slepe
Tyl now late, this other nyght
Upon my bedde I sate vpright
And bade one reche me a booke
A Romaunce, and he it me toke
To rede, and dryue the nyght away
For me thought it better play
Than play eyther at Chesse or tables
And in this boke were wrytten fables
That clerkes had in olde tyme
And other poetes, put in ryme
To rede, and for to be in mynde
Whyle men loued the lawe of kynde
This boke ne spake, but of suche thynges
Of quenes lyues, and of kynges
And many other thynges smale
Amonge al this I fonde a tale
That me thought a wonder thing.
This was the tale: There was a kyng
That hyght Seys, and had a wife
The best that myght beare lyfe
And this quene hyght Alcyone
So it befyl, thereafter sone
This kyng wol wenden ouer see
To tellen shortly, whan that he
Was in the see, thus in this wyse
Suche a tempest gan to ryse
That brake her maste, and made it fal
And clefte her shyp, and dreynt hem al
That neuer was founde, as it telles
Bode ne man, ne nothyng elles
Right thus this kyng Seys lost his lyfe
Nowe for to speke of Alcyone his wife
This lady that was lefte at home
Hath wonder, that the kynge ne come
Home, for it was a longe terme
Anon her herte began to yerne
And for that her thought euermo
It was not wele, her thought so
She longed so after the kyng
That certes it were a pytous thyng
To tel her busynesse sorowful lyfe
That she had, for her noble wyfe
For him alas, she loued alderbest
Anon she sent both est and west
To seke him, but they founde nought
Alas (quod she) that I was wrought
And where my lorde my loue be deede
Certes I nyl neuer eate breed
I make a vowe to my god here
But I mowe of my lorde here
Suche sorowe this lady to her toke
That trewly, I that made this boke
Had suche pyte, and suche routhe
To rede her sorowe, that by my trouthe
I farde the worse al the morowe
After to thynken on her sorowe
So whan this lady coude here no worde
That no man myght fynde her lorde
Ful ofte she swouned, and sayde alas
For sorow, ful nygh woode she was
Ne she coude no rede but one
But downe on knees she sate anone
And wepte, that pyte was to here
Mercy swete lady dere
(Quod she) to Juno her goddesse
Helpe me out of this distresse
And yeue me grace my lorde to se
Soone, or wete where so he be
Or how he fareth, or in what wyse
And I shal make you sacrifyse
And holly yours become I shall
With good wyll, body, herte and all
And but thou wolte this, lady swete
Sende me grace to slepe and wete
In my slepe some certayne sweuen
Where through that I may knowe euen
Whether my lorde be quicke or deed
With that word the hynde downe the heed
And fel in a swoune, as colde as stone
Her women caught her vp anone
And brought her in bed al naked
And she for weped and for waked
Was wery, and thus the deed slepe
Fell on her, or she toke kepe
Through Juno, that had herde her boone
That made her to slepe soone
For as she prayde, right so was don
In dede, for Juno right anon
Called thus her messengere
To do her erande, and he come nere
Whan he was come, she bad him thus
Go bet (quod Juno) to Morpheus
Thou knowest him wel, the god of slepe

Nowe

Howe vnderstande wel, and take kepe
Hay thus on my halfe, that he
Go fast in to the great see
And byd him that on al thynge
He take vp Seys body the kynge
That lyeth ful pale, and nothynge rody
Byd him crepe in to the body
And do it gone to Alcyone
The quene, ther. he lyeth alone
And shewe her shortely it is no nay
Howe it was dreynt this other day
And do the body speke right so
Right as it was wonned to do
The whyles that it was alyue
Gonowe fast, and hye the blyue.
This messanger toke leue and wente
Upon his way, and nought he stente
Tyl he came to the darke daley
That stante betwene rockes twey
There neuer yet grewe corne ne gras
Ne tree, ne naught that ought was
Bestne man, ne nought elles
Saue that there were a fewe welles
Came rennyng fro the cliffes adowne
That made a deedly slepynge sowne
And rennen downe right by a caue
That was vnder a rocke ygraue
Amyd the daley wonder depe
There these goddes lay a slepe
Morpheus and Ecympasteyze
That was the god of slepes heyze
That slepte, and dyd none other werke
This caue was also as derke
As hel pytte, ouer al aboute
They had good leyser for to route
To hye who myght slepe best
Some hynge her chynne vpon her brest
And slepte vpright her heed yhed
And some lay naked in her bed
And slepte whyles theyr dayes last
This messanger come rennyng fast
And cryed ho ho, awake anone
It was for naught, there herde him none
Awake (quod he) who lyeth there
And blewe his horne right in her eere
And cryed awaketh wonder hye
This god of slepe, with his one eye
Cast vp, and asked who clepeth there
It am I (quod this messangere)
Juno bade thou shuldest gone
And tolde him what he shuld done
As I haue tolde you here before
It is no nede reherse it more
And wente his way whan he had sayde
Anone this god of slepe abrayde
Out of his slepe and gan to go
And dyd as he had bydde him do
Toke vp the deed body soone
And bare it forth to Alcione
His wyfe the quene, there as she lay
Right euen a quarter before day
And stode right at her beddes fete
And called her right as she hete
By name, and sayd: My swete wyfe
Awake, let be your sorowful lyfe
For in your sorow, there lyth no rede
For certes swete loue, I am but dede
Ye shal me neuer on lyue yse
But good swete herte that ye
Bury my body, for suche a tyde
Ye mowe it fynde, the see besyde
And farewel swete, my worldes blysse
I pray god your sorowe lysse
Ful lytel while our blysse lasteth
With that her eyen vp she casteth
And sawe naught, alas (quod she) for sorowe
And dyed within the thyrde morowe
But what she sayd more in that swowe
I may nat tel you as nowe
It werr to longe for to dwel
My fyrst matere I wyl you tel
Wherfore I haue tolde this thynge
Of Alcione, and Seys the kynge
For thus moche dare I say wel
I had be dolven euerydel
And deed, right through defaute of slepe
Yf I ne had red, and take kepe
Of this tale nexte before
And I wyl tel you wherfore
For I ne myght for bote ne bale
Slepe, or I had redde this tale
Of this dreynte Seys the kynge
And of the goddes of slepynge
Whan I had red this tale wele
And ouerloked it euerydele
Me thought wonder, if it were so
For I had neuer herde speke or tho
Of no goddes, that coude make
Men to slepe, ne for to wake
For I ne knewe neuer god but one
And in my game, I sayd anone
And yet me lyst, right euyl to pley
Rather than that I shulde dey
Through defaute of slepynge thus
I wolde gyue thylke Morpheus
Or that goddesse dame Juno

Of some wyght elis, I ne roughte who
To make me slepe, and haue some rest
I wyl gyue him the aldyer best
Yette, that euer he abode his lyue
And here onwarde, right nowe as bilyue
Yf he wol make me slepe a lyte
Of downe of pure dowues whyte
I wol yeue him a fether bed
Rayed with gold, and right wel cled
In fyne blache Satryn bourrynere
And many a pyllowe, and euery here
Of clothe of raynes to slepe on softe
Him thare not nede to tourne ofte
And I wol yeue him al that falles
To his chambre and to his halles
I wol do paynte with pure golde
And tapyte hem ful many folde
Of one sute thys shall he haue
Yf I wyste where were his caue
Yf he can make me slepe sone
As dyd the goddesse, quene Alcione
And thus this ylke god Morpheus
May wynne of me mo fees thus
Than euer he wanne, and to Juno
That is his goddesse, I shall so do
I trowe that she shall holde her payde.
I had vnneth that worde ysayde
Wyght thus as I haue tolde you
That sodeynly I nyst howe
Suche a luste anone me toke
To slepe, that right vpon my boke
I fel a slepe, and therwith euen
Me mette so inly suche a sweuen
So wonderfull, that neuer yet
I trowe no man had the wyt
To conne wel my sweuen rede
No nought Joseph withoute drede
Of Egypte, he that rad so
The kynges mettynge Pharao
No more than coude the lest of vs
Ne nat scarsly Macrobeus
He that wrote al the auysyon
That he met kynge Scipion
The noble man the Affrican
Suche meruayles fortuned than
I trowe a rede my dremes euen
Lo thus it was, this was my sweuen.
Me thought thus, that it was May
And in the dawnyng there I lay
Me met thus in my bed al naked
And loked forthe, for I was waked
With smale foules a great herde
That had affrayed me out of my slepe
Through noyse, and swetnesse of her songe
And as me met, they sate amonge
Upon my chambre rofe without
Upon the tyles ouer al about
And euerych songe in his wyse
The moste solempne seruyse
By note, that euer man I trowe
Had herde, for some of hem songe lowe
Some hygh, and al of one accorde
To tel shortly at a worde
Was neuer herde so swete steuen
But it had be a thynge of heuen
So merry a sowne, so swete entunes
That certes for the towne of Tewnes
I nolde, but I had herde hem synge
For all my chambre gan to rynge
Through syngyng of her ermony
For instrument, nor melody
Was no where herde, yet halfe so swete
Nor of acorde halfe so mete
For there was none of hem that fayned
To synge, for echt of hem him payned
To fynde out many crafty notes
They ne spared nat her throtes.
And forth to sayne, my chambre was
Ful wel depaynted, and with glas
Were al the wyndowes, wel yglased
Ful clere, and nat an hole yrased
That to beholde it was great ioy
For holy al the story of Troy
Was in the glasynge ywrought thus
Of Hector, and of kynge Priamus
Of Achylles, and of kynge Lamedon
And eke of Medea, and of Jason
Of Paris, Helayne, and of Lauyne
And all the walles with colours fyne
Were paynte, bothe texte and glose
And al the Romaunce of the rose
My wyndowes weren shyt echone
And through the glasse the sunne shone
Upon my bed with bryght bemes
With many glad gyldy stremes
And eke the welkyn was so fayre
Blewe, bryght, clere was the ayre
And ful attempre, for sothe it was
For neyther to colde, ne hote it nas
Ne in all the welkyn was no clowde
And as I lay thus wonder lowde
Me thought I herde an hunte blowe
Tassay his great horne, and for to knowe
Whether it was clere, or horse of sowne
And I herde goynge bothe vp and downe
Men, horse, hounder, and other thynge

And

And al men speke of huntynge
How they wold slee the harte with strength
And howe the harte had vpon length
So moche enbosed, I not nowe what
Anon tyght whan I herde that
How that they wolde, on huntynge gone
I was tyght glad, and vp anone
Toke my horse and forth I wente
Out of my chambre, I neuer stente
Tyl I come to the feilde without
There one ther toke I a great rout
Of hunters, and eke of foresters
And many relayes and lymers
And vyed hem to the forest fast
And I with hem, so at the last
I asked one lad, a lymere
Say felowe, whos al this hunte here
(Quod I) and he answered ayen
Hit, the Emperour Octouyen
(Quod he) and is here fast by
I goddes halfe, in good tyme (quod I)
Go we fast, and gan to ryde
Whan we come to the forest syde
Euery man dyd tyght soone
As to huntynge fel to doone
The maister hunte, anone fote hote
With his horne blewe three mote
At the begynnynge of his houndes
Within a while, the harte founde he
Chaloweed, and rechaced fast
Longe tyme, and so at the last
This harte rused and stale away
Fro al the houndes a pryuy way
The houndes had ouer shot him al
And were vpon a defaulte yfal
Therwith the hunt wonder fast
Blewe a forloyn at the laste
I was go walked fro my tre
And as I went, there came by me
A whelpe, that fawned me as I stoode
That had yfolowed, and coude no goode
It came and crepte to me as lowe
Right as it had me yknowe
Helde down his heed, and loyned his eeres
And layde al smothe downe his heeres
I wolde haue caught it anone
It fled, and was fro me gone
And I him folowed, and it forth went
Downe by a floury grene it went
Ful thycke of grasse, ful softe and swete
With floures fele, faire vnder fete
And lytel vsed, it semed thus
For why the Flora, and zepherus
They two, that make floures growe
Had made her dwellyng there I trowe
For it was on to beholde
As though the erthe enuye wolde
To be gayer than the heuen
To haue mo floures, suche seuen
As in the welken sterres be
It had forget the poucrte
That wynter, through his colde morowes
Had made it suffre, and his sorowes
All was forgeten, and that was sene
For all the woode was woxen grene
Swetnesse of dewe, had made it waxe
It is no nede eke for to axe
Where there were many grene greues
Of thycke of trees, so ful of leues
And euery tree stode by him selue
Fro other, wel ten foote or twelue
So great trees, so huge of strength
Of foury or fyfty fedom length
Cleane without bowe or sticke
With croppes brode, and eke as thycke
They were not an ynche a sonder
That it was shadde ouer all vnder
And many an hart, and many an hynde
Was both before me, and behynde
Of fawnes, sowers, buckes, does
Ful as ful the wodde, and many roes
And many squyrrels, that sete
Ful hygh vpon the trees and ete
And in her maner made feestes
Shortly, it was so ful of beestes
That though Argus, the noble countour
Sate to reken in his countour
And reckon with his fygures ten
For by tho fygures newe all ken
Yf they be crafty, reken and nombre
And tel of euery thyng the nombre
Yet shulde he fayle to reken euen
The wonders me met in my swenen
But forthe I romed, right wonder faste
Downe the woode, so at the laste
I was ware of a man in blacke
That sate, and had yturned his backe
To an ooke, an huge tree
Lorde thought I, who may that be
What eyleth him to sytten here
Anon right, I went nere
Than founde I syre, euen by hym
A wonder welfaryng knyght
By the maner me thought so
Of good mokel, and right yonge therto
Of the age of foure and twenty yere

Upon his herde, but lyted herre
And he was clothed al in blacke
I stalked euen vnto his backe
And there I stode, as stylle as ought
The sothe to say, he saw me nought
For why he hynge his heed adowne
And with a deedly, sorowfull sowne
He made of ryme, ten verses or twelue
Of a complaynte, to him selue
The moste pyte, the most routhe
That euer I herde, for by my trouthe
It was great wonder that nature
Myght suffre any creature
To haue such sorow, and he not deed
Ful pytous pale, and nothyng reed
He sayd a lay, a maner songe
Without note, without songe
And was this, for ful wel I can
Reherse it, right thus it began
I haue of sorowe so great wone
That ioye get I neuer none
Nowe that I se my lady bright
Whiche I haue loued, with all my myght
Is fro me deed, and is agone
And thus in sorowe, lefte me alone
Alas dethe, what eyleth the
That thou noldest haue taken me
Whan that thou toke my lady swete
Of al goodnes, she had none mete
That was so fayre, so freshe, so fre
So good, that men may wel se
Whan he had made thus his complaynte
His sorowful hert, gan fast fayne
And his spirites wexen dede
The bloode was fledde, for pure drede
Downe to his herte, to maken him warme
For wel it feled the herte had harme
To wete ese, why it was adradde
By kynde, and for to make it gladde
For it is membre principal
Of the body, and that made al
His hewe chaunge, and wexe grene
And pale, for there no bloode is sene
In no maner lymme of his
Anon therwith, whan I sawe this
He farde thus yuel, there he sete
I went and stode right at his fete
And grette him, but he spake nought
But argued with his owne thought
And in his wytte, disputed faste
Why, and howe his lyfe might laste
Him thought his sorowes were so smerte
And lay so colde vpon his herte

So through his sorowe, and holy thought
Made hym that he herde me nought
For he had wepte lost his myode
Thought him, that men clepeth god of hyode
Were for his sorowes neuer so wrothe
But at the last, to sayne ryght sothe
He was ware of me, howe I stode
Before him, and dyd of my hode
And had ygret him, as I best coude
Debonayrly, and nothyng loude
He sayd, I pray the be not wrothe
I herde the not, to sayne the sothe
Ne I sawe the not, sir trewly
Ah good sir, no force (quod I)
I am right sory, if I haue ought
Distroubled you, out of your thought
Forgeue me, if I haue mysse take
Yes, thamendes is hyght to make
(Quod he) for there lythe none therto
There is nothyng missayde, nor do
Lo howe goodly spake this knighe
As it had be another wyght
And made it nerther tough ne queynt
And I sawe that, and gan me aqueynt
With him, and founde him so treetable
Right wonder skylful, and reasonable
As me thought, for all his bale
Anon right, I gan fynde a tale
To hym, to loke where I might ought
Haue more knowlegyng of his thought
Sir (quod I) this game is done
I holde that this hert be gone
These huntes can him no where se
I do no force therof (quod he)
My thought is theron neuer a dele
By our lorde (quod I) I trowe you wele
Right so me thynketh by your chere
But sir, o thyng wol ye here
Me thynketh in great sorowe I you se
But certes sir, if that ye
Wolde aught discure me your wo
I wolde, as wyse god helpe me so
Amende it, if I can or may
Ye mowe proue it by assay
For by my trouthe, to make you hole
I wol do al my power hole
And telleth me, of your sorowes smerte
Paraunter it may ease your herte
That semeth ful sycke vnder your syde
With that he loked on me a syde
As who saythe nay, that nyl not be
Graunt mercy good frende (quod he)
I thanke the, that thou woldest so

But

But it may neuer the rather be so
No man may my sorowe glade
That maketh my herte to fal and fade
And hath myn vnderstandyng lorne
That me is wo, that I was borne
Nay nought make my sorowes slyde
Nat al the remedies of Ouyde
Nat Orpheus, god of melodye
Nat Dedalus, with hys playes slye
Nat heale me, may no physicien
Nought Ipocras, ne Galyen
Me is wo, that I lyue houres twelue
But who so wol assaye hym selue
Whether his herte can haue pyte
Of any sorowe, let hym se me
I wretche, that dethe hath made al naked
Of al the blisse that euer was maked
I wrothe, werste of al wyghtes
That hate my dayes, and my nyghtes
My lyfe, my lustes, be me lothe
For al fare and I be wrothe
The pure deth is so ful my foe
That I wolde dye, it wyl not soe
For whan I folowe it, it wyl flye
I wolde haue him, it nyl not me
Thus is payne without reed
Alway drenge and be not deed
That Tesyphus that tyeth in hel
May not of more sorowe tel
And who so wylle al, by my trouthe
My sorowe, but he hadde routhe
And pyte of my sorowes smerte
That man hath a fendely herte
For who so seeth me fyrst on morowe
May sayne he hath metre with sorowe
For I am sorowe, and sorowe is I
Alas, and I wyl tel the why
My sorowe is tourned to playnyng
And al my laughter to wepyng
My glad thoughtes, to heuyneste
Intranayle is myn ydleneste
And eke my rest, my wele is wo
My good is harme, and euermo
In wrathe is tourned my playeng
And my delyte in to sorowyng
Myn heale is turned in to sickeneste
In drede is al my syckerneste
To derke is turned al my lyght
My wytte is folye, my day is myght
My loue is hate, my slepe wakyng
My myrth and meles, is fastyng
My countenaunce is myerte
And al abawed, where so I be
My peace pledyng, and in werre
Alas, howe myght I fare weerre
My boldeneste is turned to shame
For false fortune, hath played a game
At the cheste with me, alas the whyle
The trayteresse false, and ful of gyle
That al behoteth, and nothyng halte
She gothe vpryght, and yet she halte
That baggeth foule, and loketh fayre
The dispytous debonayre
That scorneth many a creature
In ydole of false purtrayture
Is she, for she wol some wyren
She is the monstres heed ywryen
Is fylthe, ouer strowed with floures
Her moste worthyp and her floures
To lyen, for that is her nature
Without fayth, lawe, or mesure
She false is, and euer laughyng
With one eye, and that other wepyng
That is brought vp, she set al downe
I liken her to the Scorpiowne
That is a false flatteryng beest
For with his heed he maketh fest
But al amyd hys flaterynge
With his tayle he wyl stynge
And enuenym, and so wyl she
She is the enuyous charite
That is aye false, and semeth wele
So turneth she her false whele
Aboute, for it is nothyng stable
Nowe by the fyre, nowe at table
Ful many one hath she thus ybrent
She is playe of enchauntement
That semeth one, and is not so
The false theefe, what hath she do
Troweste thou, by our lorde I wyl the say
At the Chesse with me she gan to play
With her false draughtes ful diuers
She stale on me, and toke my fers
And whan I sawe my fers away
Alas, I couthe no lenger play
But sayd, farewel swete ywis
And farewel al that euer there is
Therwith fortune sayd, checke here
And mate in the myd poynt of the checkere
With a paune errant, alas
Ful craftyer to play she was
Than Ithalus that made the game
First of the Chesse, so was his name
But god wolde I had ones or twise
Iconde, and knowe the leoperdise
That conde the Greke Pithagores

I shulde haue playde the bet at ches
And kept my feers the bet therby
And though wherto, for tre wly
I holde that wyche not worthe a stre
It had be neuer the bet for me
For fortune can so many a wyle
Ther be but fewe can her begyle
And eke she is the lasse to blame
Wy selfe I wolde haue do the same
Before god, had I ben as she
She ought the more excused be
For this I say, yet more therto
Had I be god, and myght haue do
Wy wyl, whan she my feers caught
I wolde haue drawe the same draught
For al so wyse, god gyue me reste
I dare wel swere, she toke the beste
But throughe that draught I haue lorne
Wy blysse, alas that I was borne
For euermore I trowe trewely
For al my wyl, my luste holly
Is turned, but ye, what to done
By our lorde it is to dye sone
For nothynge I leaue it nought
But lyue and dye, right in thys thought
For there nys planet in firmamente
Ne in ayre ne in erthe none elemente
That they ne yeue me a yefte echone
Of wepyng whan I am alone
For whan that I aduyse me wele
And bethynke me euerydele
How that there lieth in rekenynge
In my sorowe for nothynge
And howe there lyueth no gladnesse
May gladde me of my distresse
And howe I haue loste suffysaunce
And therto I haue no pleasaunce
Than may I say, I haue right nought
And whan al this falleth in my thought
Alas, than am I ouercome
For that is done, is not come
I haue more sorowe than Tantale
And I herde hym tel thys tale
Thus pytously, as I you tell
Unneth myght I lenger dwell
It dyd myn herte so muche wo
I good sir (quod I) say nat so
Haue some pyte on your nature
That fourmed you to creature
Remembreth you of Socrates
For he ne counteth not thre strees
Of nought that fortune conde do
No (quod I) I can not so
Why good sir, yes parde (quod I)
Ne say not so, for truely
Though ye had loste the ferrses twelue
And ye forsoth we murdred your selue
Ye shulde be dampned in this cale
By as good right as Medea was
That slough her children for Jason
And Phillis also, for Demophon
Hynge her selfe, so welaway
For he had broke his terme day
To come to her: Another rage
Had Dido, the quene eke of Carrage
That slough her selfe, for Eneas
Was false, whiche a foole she was
And Ecquo dyed, for Narcisus
Nolde nat loue her, and right thus
Hath many another foly done
And for Dalida dyed Sampsone
That slough hym selfe with a piere
But there is no man alyue here
Wolde for her feers make this wo
Why so (quod he) it is not so
Thou wotest ful lyte what thou menest
I haue loste more than thou wenest
Howe may that be (quod I)
Good sir, tel me al holly
In what wise, howe, why, and wherfore
That ye haue thus your blisse lore
Blythely (quod he) come sit doun
I tel the vpon a condicioun
That thou shalte holly with al thy wyt
Do thyne entente to herken it
Yes sir: Swere thy trouthe therto
Gladly do than holde here to
I shal right blythely, so god me saue
Holly with al the witte I haue
Here you as wel as I can
A goddes halfe (quod he) and began
Sir (quod he) syth firste I couthe
Haue any maner witte fro youthe
Or kindely vnderstandinge
To comprehende in any thynge
What loue was, in myne owne wyt
Yerde dele I haue euer yet
Be tributary, and yeue rente
To loue holly, with good entente
And through pleasaunce become his thral
With good wyl, body, herte and al
Al thys I put in hys seruage
As to my lorde, and dyd homage
And ful deuoutly I prayde hym tho
He shulde beset myne herte so
That it pleasaunce to hym were

And

And worthip to my lady dere
And this was longe, and many a yere
(Er that myn herte was set o where)
That I vyd thus, and nyste why
I trowe it came me kyndely
Paraunter I was therto moste able
As a whyte wal, or a table
For it is redy to ratche and take
Al that men wyl therin make
Whether so men wyl portrey or paynte
Be the werkes neuer so quaynte.
And thylke tyme I fared ryght so
I was able to haue lerned tho
And to haue conde, as wel or better
Paraunter, either arte or letter
But for loue came first in my thought
Therfore I forgate it nought
I chees loue to my first crafte
Therfore it is with me lafte
For why, I toke it of so yonge age
That malice hadde my corage
Not that tyme, turned to nothyng
Thzough to mokel knowlegyng
For that tyme, youth my mayſtreſſe
Gouerned me in ydelneſſe
For it was in my firſt youthe
And tho ful lytel good I couthe
For al my werkes were flyttyng
That tyme, and al my thought varieng
Al were to me yliche goode
That knewe I tho, but thus it ſtode.
It happed that I came on a day
Into a place, there that I ſey
Trewly the faireſt companye
Of ladies, that euer man with eye
Had ſene togythers in o place
Shal I clepe it happe, either grace
That brought me there, not but fortune
That is to lyen ful comune
The falſe traytereſſe peruerſe
God wolde I couldе clepe her werſe
For nowe ſhe worcheth me ful wo
And I wol tel ſone why ſo.
Amonges theſe ladies thus echone
Sothe to ſayne, I ſawe one
That was lyke none of the route
For I dare ſwere, without doute
That as the cōmers comme bzyght
Is fairer, clerer, and hath moze lyght
Than any other planet in heuen
The moone, or the ſterres ſeuen
For al the worlde ſo had ſhe
Surmounten hem al of beaute
Of maner, and of comlyneſſe
Of ſtature, and of wel ſet gladeneſſe
Of goodly heed, and ſo wel beſey
Shortly, what ſhal I more ſey
By god and by hys holowes twelue
It was my ſwete, right al her ſelue
Shе had ſo ſtedfaſt countrenaunce
So noble porte, and mayntenaunce
And Loue, that wel harde my bone
Had eſpyed me thus ſone
That ſhe ful ſone in my thought
As helpe me god, ſo was I cought
So ſodaynly, that I ne toke
No maner counſayle, but at her loke
And at myn herte, for why her eyen
So gladly I trowe myn herte feyne
That purely tho, myn owne thought
Sayd, it were better ſerue her for nought
Than with another to be wele
And it was ſothe, for euery dele
I wyll anone ryght tel the why
I ſawe her daunce ſo comely
Carol and ſyng ſo ſweetely
Laugh, and play ſo womanly
And loke ſo debonairly
So goodly ſpeke and ſo frendely
That certes I trowe that euermore
Nas ſene ſo blyſful a treſore
For euery heer on her heed
Sothe to ſay it was not reed
Ne neither yelowe ne brovvne it nas
Me thought moſte lyke golde it was
And whiche eyen my lady had
Debonaire, good, ad, and ſad
Simple, of good mokel, not to wyde
Therto her loke nas not aſyde
Ne ouertwhart, but beſet ſo wele
It drewe and toke vp euerydele
Al that on her gan beholde
Her eyen ſemed anone ſhe wolde
Haue mercy, folly wenden ſo
But it was neuer the rather do
It nas no counterfeted thynge
It was her owne pure lokyng
That the goddeſſe dame Nature
Had made hem open by meaſure
And cloſe, for were ſhe neuer ſo glad
Her lokyng was not folyſhe ſpzad
Ne wyldely, though that ſhe playde
But euer me thought her eyen ſayde
By god my wrathe is al forgeue
Therwith her lyſte ſo wel to lyue
That dulneſſe was of her a dzad

She nas to sobre ne to glad
In al thinges more measure
Had neuer I trowe creature
But many one with her loke she herte
And that sate her ful yrel at herte
For she knewe nothynge of her thought
But whether she knewe, or knewe it nought
Algate she ne wrought of hem a stree
To get her loue no nere nas he
That woned at home, than he in Inde
The formest was alway behynde
But good folke ouer al other
She loued, as man may his brother
Of whiche loue she was wonder large
In sad ful places that bere charge
But whiche a vysage had she therto
Alas my herte is wonder wo
That I ne can discriuen it
My lacketh both Englishe and wit
For to vndo it at the full
And eke my spirites ben so dull
So great a thynge for to deuyse
I haue not wit that can suffyse
To comprehende her beaute
But thus muche I dare sayne that she
Was whyte, rody, freshe, and lyuely hewed
And euery day her beaute newed
And nyght her face was alderbeste
For certes nature had suche leste
To make that fayre, that trewely she
Was her chefe patron of beaute
And chefe ensample of al her werke
And monstre, for be it neuer so derke
Me thynketh I se her euer mo
And yet more ouer, though al tho
That euer lyued, were nowe a lyue
Ne wolde haue founde to discryue
In al her face, a wicked signe
For it was sad, symple, and benigne
And suche a goodly swete speche
Had that swete, my lyues leche
So frendely, and so wel ygrounded
Upon al reason, so wel yfounded
And so tretable to al good
That I dare swere wel by the rood
Of eloquence was neuer founde
So swete a sownyng facounde
Ne trewer tonged, ne scorned lasse
Ne bet coude beale: That by the masse
I durste swere, though the Pope it songe
That ther was neuer yet, through her tonge
Wanne woman greatly harmyd
As for her, was al harme hyd
Ne lasse flatteryng in her worde
That purely her symple recorde
Was founde as trewe as any bonde
Or trouthe, of any mannes honde
Ne chyde she coulde neuer a dele
That knoweth al the worlde ful wele
But suche a fayrenesse of a necke
Had that swete, that bone nor brecke
Nas there none seue, that myght latte
It was whyte, smothe, streight, a pure flam
Without hole, or canel bone
And by seuyng, she had none
Her throte, as I haue nowe memoire
Semed as a conduct of yuoire
Of good greatnesse, and not to grete
And fayre whyte she hete
That was my ladies name right
She was therto fayre and bright
She had not her name wronge
Right fayre sholders, and body longe
She had, and armes euer lyth
Fatty she fleshy, nat great therwith
Right white handes, and nayles rede
Rounde brestes: And of good brede
Her hyppes were, a streight flatte backe
I knewe on her none other lacke
That al her ymages were pure sewyng
In as ferre as I had knowyng.
Therto coulde so wel playe
What that her lyste, that I dare saye
That was lyke to rorche bright
That euery man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath neuer the lesse
Of maner and of comlynesse
Right so farde my lady dere
For euery wight of her manere
Myght catche ynough, if that he wolde
Yf he had eyen her to beholde
For I dare swearre wel, if that she
Had amonge ten thousande be
She wolde haue be at the beste
Chefe myrroure of al the feste
Though they had stonde in a rowe
To mennes eyen, that coulde haue knowe
For where so men had playde, or waked
We thought the felowshyppe as naked
Without her, that I sawe ones
As a crowne without stones
Trewly she was to myn eye
The solein Fruit of Arabye
For there lyueth neuer but one
Ne suche as she, ne knowe I none
To speke of goodnesse, trewly she

Had

had as muche debonaire
As euer had Hester in the Bible
And more, if more were possible
And sothe to sayne, therwithal
She hadde a witte so general
So hole enclined to al goode
That al her witte was sette by the roode
Without maner, vpon gladnesse
And therto I saw neuer yet a lesse
Harmful, than she was in doyng
I say not that she ne hadde knowyng
What harme was, or els she
Had coulde no good, so thinketh me
And trewly, for to speake of trouthe
But she had had, it had be routhe
Therof she had so muche her dele
And I dare sayne, and swere it wele
That trouthe hym selfe, ouer al and al
Had chose his maner principal
Inher, that was his resting place
Therto she had the moste grace
To haue stedfaste perseuerance
And eafy attempre gouernance
That euer I knewe, or wyste yet
So pure suffraunt was her wyt
And reason gladly she vnderstoode
It followed wel, she coulde goode
She vsed gladly to do wele
These were her maners euery dele
Therwith she loued so wel ryght
She wronge do wolde to no wyght
No wight might do her no shame
She loued so wel her owne name
Her lust to holde no wight in honde
Ne be thou siker, she wolde not fonde
To holde no wyght in balaunce
By halfe worde, ne by countenaunce
But if men wolde vpon her lye
Ne sende men in to Walakye
To Pruise, and to Tartarye
To Alisaundrie, ne in to Turkye
And bidde him fast, anon that he
Go hoodlesse in to the drie see
And come home by the Carrenare
And sir, be nowe ryght ware
That I may of you here sayne
Wurshipp, or that ye come agayne
She ne vsed no suche knackes smale
But therfore that I tel my tale
Right on this same, I haue sayde
Was holly al my loue layde
For certes she was that swete wyfe
My sufficiaunce, my lust, my lyfe
Myn hope, myn heale, and al blesse
My worldes welfare, and my goddesse
And I holly hers, and euery dele
By our lorde (quod I) I trowe you wele
Hardly your loue was wel beset
I not howe it might haue be bet
Bet, ne not so wel (quod he)
I trowe sir (quod I) parde.
Nay leue it wel: Sir so do I
I leue you wel, that trewly
You thought that she was the best
And to beholde, the alderfairest
Who so had loked her with your eyene
With myn, nay al that her seyen
Sayd and swore, it was so
And though they ne had, I wolde tho
Haue loued best my lady fre
Though I had had al the beaute
That euer had Alcipiades
And al the strength of Hercules
And therto had the worthynesse
Of Alisaunder, and al the richesse
That euer was in Babiloyne
In Cartage, or in Macedoyne
Or in Rome, or in Ninive
And therto also hardy be
As was Hector, so haue I ioye
That Achilles slough at Troye
And therfore was he slayne also
In a temple, for bothe two
Were slayne, he and Antilegius
And so sayth Dares Frigius
For loue of Polixena
Or ben as wise as Minerua
I wolde euer, without drede
Haue loued her, for I muste nede
Nede? Nay trewly I gabbe nowe
Naught nede, and I wol tellen howe
For of good wyl myn herte it wolde
And ere to loue her, I was holde
As for the fairest and the beste
She was as good, so haue I reste
As euer was Penelope of Greece
Or as the noble wyfe Lucrece
That was the beste, he telleth thus
The Romayne Titus Lyuius
She was as good, and nothyng lyke
Though her stories be autentyke
Algate she was as trewe as she
But wherfore that I tel the
Whan I first my lady sey
I was right yonge, sothe to say
And ful great nede I had to lerne

Whan

Whan myn herte wolde perne
To loue it was a great empryse
But as my wytte wolde beste suffise
After my youge chyldely wit
Without drede I beset it
To loue her in my beste wyse
To do her worthyp, and the seruyse
That I coude tho, by my trouthe
Without fayning, eyther slouthe
For wonder fayne, I wolde her se
So mokell it amended me
That whan I sawe her amorowe
I was waryshed of al my sorowe
Of al day after, tyl it were eue
Me thought nothynge might me greue
Were my sorowes neuer so smerte
And yet she syt so in myn herte
That by my trouthe, I nolde nought
For al thys worlde, out of my thought
Leaue my lady, no trewly
Nowe by my trouthe sir (quod I)
Me thynketh ye haue suche a chaunce
As thryfte, without repentaunce
Repentaunce, nay fye (quod he)
Shulde I nowe repent me
To loue, nay certes than were I wel
Werse than was Achytofel
Or Antenor, so haue I ioye
The traytour that betrayed Troye
Or the false Genellon
Ne that purchased the trayson
Of Roulande, and of Olyuere
Nay, whyle I am a lyue here
I tyl forzet her neuer mo
Nowe good sir (quod I) tho
Ye haue wel tolde me here before
It is no nede to reherse it more
Howe ye sawe her first, and where
But wolde ye tel me the manere
To her, whiche was your first speche
Therof I wolde you beseche
And howe she knewe first your thought
Whether ye loued her, or nought
And telleth me eke, what ye haue lore
I herde you tel here before
Ye sayde, thou notest what thou menest
I haue lost more than thou wenest
What losse is that (quod I tho)
Tyl she not loue you, is it so
Or haue ye ought done amis
That she hath lefte you, is it this
For goddes loue tel me al
Before god (quod he) and I shal
I say right as I haue sayde
On her was al my loue layde
And yet she nist it not neuer a dele
Not longe tyme, true it wele
For be ryght syker, I durst nought
For al this worlde, tel her my thought
Ne I wolde haue wrathed her trewly
For wost thou why, she was lady
Of the body that had the herte
And who so hath that may not asterte
But for to kepe me fro ydelnesse
Trewly I dyd my busynesse
To make songes as I beste coude
And ofte tyme I songe hem loude
And made songes, this a great dele
Although I coude nat make so wele
Songes, ne knewe the arte al
As coude Lamekes sone Tubal
That founde out first the arte of songe
For as his brothers hamers ronge
Upon his anuelt vp and downe
Therof he toke the first sowne
But grekes sayne of Pithagoras
That he the first fynder was
Of the arte, Auroza telleth so
But therof no force of hem two
Algares songes thus I made
Of my felyng, myn herte to glade
And lo, this was aither first
I not where it were the werst
Lorde it maketh myn herte lyght
Whan I thynke on that swete wyght
That is so semely on to se
And wisshe to god it myght so be
That she wolde holde me for her knyght
My lady, that is so fayre and bryght
Nowe haue I tolde the, forth to say
My first songe vpon a day
I bethought me what wo
And sorowe that I suffred tho
For her, and yet she wyste it nought
Ne tel her durst I not my thought
Alas thought I, I can no rede
And but I tel her, I am but dede
And if I tel her, to say right sothe
I am a dradde she wol be wrothe
Alas, what shal I than do
In this debate I was so wo
Me thought myne herte brast a twayne
So at the laste, sothe for to sayne
I bethought me that Nature
Ne formed neuer in creature
So muche beaute trewly

And

And bountie, without mercy
In hope of that, my tale I tolde
With sorowe, as that I neuer sholde
For nedes, and maugre myne herd
I must haue tolde her, or be derd
I not wel howe that I began
Ful vertil reherse it I can
And eke as helpe me god with hal
I trowe it was in the dismal
That was the ten woundes of Egypte
For many a worde I ouer skypte
In my tale for pure fere
Lest my wordes myssit set were
With sorowful hert, and woundes dede
Sofre and quakyng for pure drede
And shame, and stynting in my tale
For ferde, and myne hewe al pale
Ful ofte I wext bothe pale and red
Lowryng to her I hynge the herd
I durst not ones loke her on
For wyt, maner, and al was gone
I sayd: mercy, and no more
It nas no game, it sate me sore.
So at the laste, sothe to sayne
When that myne herte was come agayne
To tel shortly al my speche
With hole herte, I gan her beseche
That she wolde be my lady swete
And swore, and hertely gan her hete
Euer to be stedfast and trewe
And loue her alway freshly newe
And neuer other lady haue
And all her worshyp for to saue
As I best coude, I swerre her this
For yours is al that euer there is
For euermore, myne hert swete
And neuer to false you, but I mete
I nyl, as wyse god helpe me so
And whan I had my tale ydo
God wote she acompted not a stre
Of all my tale, so thought me
To tel shortly, right as it is
Trewly her answere it was this
I can not nowe wel countrefete
Her wordes, but this was the grete
Of her answere, she sayd nay
All vtterly, alas that day
The sorowe I suffred and the wo
That trewly Cassandra, that so
Bewayled the distruction
Of Troye, and of Illyon
Had neuer suche sorowe as I tho
I durst no more say therto
For pure fere, but stale away
And thus I lyued ful many a day
That trewly I had no nede
Ferther than my beddes hede
Neuer a day to seche sorowe
I founde it redy euery morowe
For why, I loued her in no gere
So it befel another yere
I thought ones I wolde fonde
To do her knowe, and vnderstonde
My wo, and she wel vnderstoode
That I ne wyned thyng but goode
And worshyp, and to kepe her name
Ouer al thynges, and drede her shame
And was so besy her to serue
And pyte were I shulde sterue
Sythe that I wyned none harme ywis
So whan my lady knewe al this
My lady yaue me al holy
The noble pefte of her mercy
Saurng her worshyp by alwayes
Vtterlieste, I mene none other wayes
And therwith she yaue me a ryng
I trow it was the fyrst thyng
But if myne hert was ywaxe
Glad, that it is no nede to axe
As helpe me god, I was as blyus
Reysed, as fro dethe to lyue
Of al happes the alder best
The gladdest, and the most at rest
For trewly that swete wight
When I had wronge, and she the right
She wolde alway so goodly
Forgyue me so debonairly
In al my youth, in al chaunce
She toke in her gouernaunce
Therwith she was alway so trewe
Our ioy was euer ilyche newe
Our hertes werne so euen a payre
That neuer nas that one contrayre
To that other, for no wo
For sothe ilyche they suffred tho
O blysse, and eke o sorowe bothe
Ilyche they were bothe glad and wroth
Al was vs one, without were
And thus we lyued ful many a yere
So wel, I can not tell howe.
Sir (quod I) where is she nowe
Nowe (quod he) and syghte anone
Therwith he wexe as ded as stone
And said, alas that I was borne
That was the losse, that here before
I tolde the, that I had lorne

Methynke the bokes I fayd here before
Thou woldst fayn lerne what thou menest
I haue lasse more than thou wenest
God wot alas, eyght that was the
Alas syr how, what may that be
She is deed: Nay, Yes by my trouthe
Is that your losse, by god it is routhe.
And with that worde right anone
They gan to strake forth, al was done
For that tyme, the hart huntynge
With that me thought that this kynge
Gan homewarde for to ryde
Unto a place was there besyde
Which was from vs but a lyte
A longe castell with walles whyte
By saynte Johan, on a ryche hyl
As me mette, but thus it fyl
Right thus me mette, as I you tell
That in the castell there was a bel
As it had smyte houres twelue
Therwith I awoke my selue
And founde me lyenge in my bedde
And the boke that I had redde
Of Alcyone, and Seys the kyng
And of the goddes of slepyng
I founde it in myn houde ful eyn
Thought I, this is so queynt a swenyn
That I wolde by proceste of tyme
Fonde, to put this sweuen in ryme
As I can best, and that anone
This was my sweuen, nowe it is done.

Explicit.

MY maister Ge. Whan of Chrish
our kyng
Was asked, what is trouth or
forthfastnesse
He not a worde answerde
To that asking
As who sayth, no man is all trewe I gesse
And therfore, though I hyght to expresse
The sorowe and wo that is in maryage
I dare not wryten of it no wyckednesse
Lest I my selfe fal efte in suche dotage

I wol not saye howe that it is the chayne
Of Sathanas, on which he knaweth euer
But I dare sayne, were he out of his payne
As by his wyl, he wolde be bounden never
Unto that dayed foole, that efte hath leuer
Chayned be, than out of prison crepe
God let him never fro his wo discreuer
Ne no man him bewayle, though he wepe

But yet lesse thou do worse, take a wyfe
Bet is to wedde, than brenne in worse wyse
But if thou haue sorow on thy fleth thy lyfe
And ben thy wyues thral, as saith these wyse
And if that holy writte may not suffise
Experyence shal the teache, so may happe
Take the way leuer to be take in fryse
Than efte to fal of weddyng in the trappe

This lytel writ, prouerbes or figures
I sende you, take kepe of it I rede
Unwyse is he, that can no wele endure
If thou be syker, put the not in drede
The wyfe of Bathe, I pray you that ye rede
Of this matter, that we haue on honde
God graunt you your lyfe freely to lede
In fredome, for foule is to be bonde.

Explicit.

The assemble of Foules.

THe lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne
Thassay so hard, so sharp the conquering
The dredful ioy, alway that flyt so yern
Al this meane I by loue, that my feling
Astonyeth, with his wonderful werkyng
So sore I wis, that whan I on him thinke
Naught wote I wel, whether I flete or synke

For al be that I knowe not loue in dede
Ne wot how that he quyteth folke here hyre
Yet happeth me full ofte in bokes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruel yre
There rede I well, he wol be lorde and syre
I dare not saye, his strokes be sore
But god saue such a lord, I can no more

Of blame, what for lacke of what for lore
On bokes rede I ofte, as I you tolde
But wherfore I speke al this, naught yore
Agon, it happed me to beholde
Upon a boke, was ywritte with letters olde
And therupon, a certayne thyng to lerne
The long day, ful fast I radde and yerne

For

For out of the olde feldes, as men saythe
Cometh al this newe corne, fro yere to yere
And out of olde bokes, in good saythe
Cometh al this newe science, that men lere
But now to purpose, as of this matere
To rede forthe, it gan me so delyte
That al that day, me thought it but a lyte

This boke, of which I make mencyon
Entytled was right thus, as I shal tel
Tullius, of the dreame of Scipion
Chapiters seuen it had, of heuen and hel
And erthe, and soules that therin dwel
Of whiche, as shortly as I can it reherce
Of his sentence, I wol you sayne the reherce

First telleth it, whan Scipion was come
In Affryke, how he metyth Massynysse
That him for ioy, in armes hath ynome
Than telleth he her sperthe, and al the blysse
That was betwixe hem, tyl the day gan mysse
And how his auncestre Affriken so dere
Can in his slepe that nyght tyl him apere

Than telleth it, that from a sterry place
How Affrikan hath him Carrage shewed
And warned him before, of al his grace
And sayd him what man, lered eyther leude
That loueth comune profyte, wel ythewde
He shulde in to a blysful place wende
There as the loye is without any ende

Than asked he, if folke that here ben dede
Haue lyfe, and dwellyng in another place
And Affrikan sayd ye, without any drede
And how our present lyues space
Ment but a maner deth, what way we trace
And right ful folke, shul gon after they dye
To heuen, and shewed him the Galaxie

Than shewed he him, the lytel erthe that here is
To regarde of the heuens quantyte
And after shewed he him the nyne speris
And after that the melodye herde he
That cometh of thilke speres thrise three
That welles of musyke ben, and melodye
In this worlde here, and cause of armonye

Than sayd he him, lens erthe was so lyte
And ful of turment, and of harde grace
That he ne shulde him in this worlde delyte
Than tolde he him, in certayne yeres space
That euery sterre, shulde come into hys place
There it was first, and al shuld out of mynde
That in this worlde is done, of all mankynde

Than prayde him Scipion, to tel him al
The way to come in to that heuen blysful
And he sayde: First mowe thy self remembre
And loke aye besely, that thou werche & wysse
To comune profyte, and thou shalt not mysse
To come swyftly, into that place dere
That ful of blysse is, and of soules fiere

And brekers of the lawe, forthe to sayne
And lyckerous folke, after that they ben dede
Shul whirle about the world, alway in payne
Tyl many a world be passed, out of drede
And than forgeuen all her wicked dede
Than shullen they come, to that blysful place
To which to comen, god sende the grace.

The day gan fayle, and the derke nyght
That reueth bestes from her besynesse
Berafte me my boke for lacke of lyght
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse
Fulfylled of thought, and bely heuynesse
For both I had thyng, which that I nolde
And eke I ne had that thyng that I wolde

But fynally my spyrite at laste
For wery of my labour al that day
Toke rest, that made me to slepe faste
And in my slepe I met, as that I lay
How Affrikan, right in the selfe aray
That Scipion him sawe, before that tyde
Was come, & stode right at my beddes syde

The wery hunter, slepyng in his bedde
The wodde ayen his mynde goth anone
The fuge dremeth, how his pleys be spedde
The carter dremeth, how his cartes gone
The riche of gold, the knight fyght with his fone
The sicke merte he thinketh of the tonne
The louer met, he hath his lady wonne

Can I not sayne, if that the cause were
For I had radde of Affrikan before
That made me to mete that he stode there
But thus sayd he: thou hast the so well bore
In lokyng of myne olde boke al to tore
Of whiche Macrobie taught not a lyte
That sondele of thy labour wolde I quyte

Citherea, thou blysful lady swete
That with thy fyrebrande, daunsest whan the lest
Aaa.ii. That

Wolde wardeyn me this chesoun for to mete
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou mayst best
As myselfe as I seyde the noothe nooth the werst
And thus I began my chesoun for to write
As sone me myght, to ryme it and endyte

This rysen lyth Affrikan me hente anone
And forth with him to a gate brought
Right of a parke, walled with grene stone
And ouer ȳ gate, with letters larg ywrought
There were verse ywritten, as me thought
On eyther halfe, of ful great difference
Of which I shal you say, the plain sentence

Thrugh me men gon into that blysful place
Of hertes heale, and deedly woundes cure
Thrugh me men gon into the wel of grace
There grene & lusty May, shal euer endure
This is the way to all good auenture
Be glad thou reder, and thy sorowe of cast
I open am I, passe in and spede the fast

Through me me gon, thus spake ȳ other syde
Unto the mornall strokes of the speare
Of whiche dil dayne and daunger is the gyde
There neuer tree shall frute, ne leaues beere
This streme you ledeth to ȳ sorowfull weere
There as the fysshe in prison is al dyre
The eschewyng is onely the remedye

These verses of gold & asure ywritte were
Of whiche I gan, astonyed to beholde
For with that one, encreased al my feare
And with that other gan my herte to bolde
That one me bet, that other dyd me colde
Now wyt had I, for errour for to cheste
To entre or flye, or me to saue or leste

Right as betweene Adamantes two
Of euyn weyght, a pece of yron set
Ne hath no might to mone to ne fro
For what that one may haue, that other let
So fared I, that I nyst where me was bet
To entre or leaue, tyl Affrycan my gyde
Me hent and thrue in, at the gates wyde

And sayd, it standeth written in thy face
Thyne errour, thought thou tell it nat me
But dreede the nat, to come in to this place
For this writyng is nothyng ment by the
Ne by none, but he loues seruaunt be
Soueraygn of loue, hast lost thy rest I gesse
Of euery man hath, of swete and bytternesse

But natheles, although thou be dul
That thou canst not do, yet mayste thou se
For many a man, that may not stande a pul
Yet lyketh it him, at the wrestlyng for to be
And demeth yet, whether he do bet, or he
And if thou haddest cunnynge for tendyte
I shall the shewe matter of to wryte

And with that my hande in' he toke anone
Of which I comforte caught, & went in fast
But lorde so I was glad, and well begon
For ouer all, where I myne eyen cast
Were trees clad with leaues, ȳ eye shal last
Eche in his kynde, with colour fresh & grene
As Emerande, that lyste it was to sene

The pylier Ook, and ... the hardy Asshe
The pyler elme, the c... vnto carayne
The bore pype tre, holme to whyppes lasshe
The saylynge fyrre, the cipres deethe to playne
The shoter ewe, the aspe for shaftes playne
The Olyue of peace, and eke ȳ dronken vyne
The victor Palme, the laurer to deuyne

A gardeyne saw I, ful of blosomed bowis
Upon a ryuer, in a grene mede
There as swetnesse, euermore ynough is
With floures whyte, blewe, yelowe, and rede
And colde well stremes, nothynge dede
That swommen ful of smale fysshes lyghte
With fynnes rede, and scales syluer bryghte

On euery bough the brydes herde I singe
With voyce of aungel, in her armony
That busyed hem, her brydes forth to bringe
The lytel pyety cowpes, to her play gan hy
And further al aboute, I gan espye
The dredful Roe, ȳ bucke, the hart, & hynde
Squyrels, and bestes, smal of gentyl kynde

Of instrumentes, of strynges in accorde
Herde I so playe, a ranysshyng swetnesse
That god, that maker is of all and lorde
Ne herde neuer better, as I gesse
Therwith a winde, vneth it myght be lesse
Made in the leues grene, a noyse softe
Accordant to the foules songe on lofte

The ayre of the place, so attempre was & colde
That neuer was there greuaunce of hote ne
There was eke euery holsome spyce & gras
Ne no man may there waxe sicke ne olde
Ne there was neyther foule ne beste that wolde
Yet was there more ioy a thousande folde

Than

Than I can tel, or euer coude or myght
There is euer clere day, and neuer nyght

Under a tree, beside a wel I sey
Cupide our lorde, his arowes forge and file
And at his fete, his bowe al redy lay
And wel his doughter tempred al the while
The heedes in the wel, with her wyle
She couched hem after, as they shuld serue
Some to slee, & some to wounde and carue

Tho was I ware of Plesaunce anon right
And of aray, lust, beaute, and curtesy
And of the crafte, that can hath the myght
To done before, a wight to done foly
Disfygured was she, I wyll nat lye
And by hym selfe, under an oke I gesse
Saw I Deiyte, that stode with gentylnesse

Than saw I Beaute, with a nyce atyre
And youth, ful of game and iolyte
Foolhardynesse, flatery, and desyre
Messagery, mede, and other thre
Her name shal nat here be told for me
And vpon pylers great of Jasper longe
I sawe a temple of Brasse yfounded stronge

And aboute the temple, daunced alway
Women ynowe, of whiche some there were
Fayre of hem selfe, and some of hem were gay
In kyrtyls al disheueled went they there
That was theyr office euer, fro yere to yere
And on the temple, sawe I whyte and fayre
Of bowes flytting, many a thousand payre

And before the temple dore ful soberly
Dame Peace sat, a curteyne in her honde
And her besyde, wonder discretely
Dame Pacience, sittynge there I fonde
With face pale, vpon an hyl of sonde
And alther nerre, within and without
Behest and Ire, and of her folke a route

Within the temple, of syghes hote as fyre
I herde a swough, that gan aboute ren
Whiche syghes were engendred with desyre
That made euery herte for to bren
Of newe flambe, and wel espyed I then
That al the cause of sorowes, that they dyde
Come of the bytter goddes ialousye

The god Priapus, sawe I as I went
Within the temple, in souerayne place stonde
In suche array, as whan the asse him hent
With crye by nyght, and with sceptre in honde
Ful busely men gan assay and fonde
Upon his heed to set of sondry hewe
Garlandes, ful of freshe floures newe

And in a preuy corner, in dyspyte
Founde I Venus, and her porter Rychesse
That was ful noble, and hauten of her porte
Derke was that place, but after lyghtnesse
I sawe a lyte, vnnethes it myght be lesse
And on a bed of golde, she lay to rest
Tyl that the hote sonne gan to west

Her gylte heeres, with a golde threde
Ybounde were, attressed as she lay
And naked from the brest vnto the hede
Men myght her se, and sothly for to say
The remenaunt, couered wel to my pay
Right with a lytell kerchefe of valence
There was no thycker clothe of defence

The place gaue a thousande sauours sote
And Bacchus god of wyne, sate her besyde
And Ceres nexte, that doth of hunger bote
And as I sayd, a myddes lay Cupyde
To whom on knees, the yonge folkes cryde
To be theyr helpe, but thus I let her lye
And farther in the temple, I gan espye

That in dispite of Diane the chaste
Ful many a bowe ybroke, hynge on the wal
Of maydens, suche as gon her tymes waste
In her seruice, and paynted ouer al
Of many a storie, of which I touche shal
A fewe, as of Calixte and Athalante
And many a maide, of which ỹ name I want

Semyramus, Candace, and Hercules
Byblis, Dido, Tysbe, and Piramus
Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles
Helayne, Cleopatre, and Troylus
Scylla, and eke the mother of Romulus
All these were paynted on that other syde
And all her loue, and in what plyte they dyde

Whan I was comen eyen in to the place
That I of spake, that was so sote and grene
Forthe walked I tho, my seluen to solace
Tho was I ware, where there sate a quene
That as of lyght, the somer sonne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so ouer mesure
She fayrer was than any creature

And in a launde, vpon an hyl of floures
Was set this noble goddesse Nature
Of braunches were her halles & her bowres
Ywrought, after her craft and her mesure
Ne there was foule, ỹ cometh of engendrure
That there ne were prest, in her presence
To take her dome, and yeue her audyence

For this was on saynt Valentynes day
Whan euery foule cometh to chese her make
Of euery kynde, that men thynke may
And that so huge a noyse gan they make
That erthe, see, and tree, and euery lake
So ful was, that vnneth there was space
For me to stande, so ful was al the place

And right as Alayne, in the playnt of kynde
Deuyseth Nature, of suche aray and face
In suche aray, men myght her there fynde
This noble Empresse ful of al grace
Bad euery foule take her owne place
As they were wont alway, fro yere to yere
On saynt Valentynes day, standen there

That is to saye, the foules of rayne
Were hyghest set, and than the foules smale
That eaten, as that nature wolde enclyne
As worme or thynge, of whiche I tel no tale
But water foule, sat lowest in the dale
And foules that liueth by sede, sate on ỹ grene
And that so many, that wonder was to sene

There myght men the royal Egle fynde
That with his sharpe loke, perseth the sonne
And other Egles of a lower kynde
Of whiche that clerkes wel deuysen conne
There was the tyrant with his fethers dun
And grene, I mene ỹ gosshauke ỹ doth pyne
To byrdes, for his outrageous rayne

The gerfol faucon, ỹ with his fete dystryneth
The kynges hande, the hardy sperhauke eke
The quales foe, the merlyon that peyneth
Him selfe ful ofte, the larke for to seke
There was the doue, with her eyen meke
The ielous swan, ayenst his dethe ỹ syngeth
The oule eke, that of deth the bode bryngeth

The crane, the geant, wt his trompes sowne
The theef the choughe, & the chatteryng pye
The scorning Jaye, the Ges for the berowne
The false lapwynge, ful of trechery
The starr, that the counsayle can bewry
The tame Ruddocke, and the cowarde hyne
The Cocke, that horloge is of thropes lyne

The sparowe Venus son, & the nyghtyngale
That clepeth forth the freshe leaues newe
The swalowe murdrer of the flyes smale
That maken hony, of floures freshe of hewe
The wedded turtil, with his hert trewe
The pecocke, with his aungel fethers bryght
The Jestaunt, scorner of the cocke by nyght

The waker gose, the cuckowe euer vnkynde
The popyngey, ful of bely cast
The drake, stroyer of his owne kynde
The storke, wreker of auoutry
The hote cormeraunt, ful of glotony
The rauin & the crowe, with her voice of care
The throstel olde, and ... frotty fieldefare

What should I say, of foules of euery kynde
That in this worlde haue fethers & stature
Men myght in that place assembled fynde
Before that noble goddes of Nature
And eche of them dyd his busy cure
Benygnely to chese, or for to take
By her accorde, his formel or his make

But to the poynt, Nature held on her honde
A formall Egle, of shap the gentyliest
That euer she among her works fonde
The most benygne, and eke the goodyest
In her was euery vertue, at his rest
So farforth, that nature her selfe had blysse
To loke on her, and ofte her herte to kysse

Nature, the vycar of the almyghty lorde
That hote, colde, hevy, lyght, moyst, and dry
Hath knyt, by euen nombre of accorde
In easy boyce, began to speke and say
Foules take hede of my sentence I pray
And for your owne ease, in fordryng of youre
As fast as I may speke, I wyl me spede (nede

Ye know wel, how on saynt Valentynes day
By my statute, & through my gouernaunce
Ye do chese your makes, and after flye away
With hem, as I pricke you with plesaunce
But natheles, as by ryghtful ordynaunce
May I nat let, for al this worlde to wyn
But he that most worthyest is, shal begyn

The tercel Egle, as ye knowe ful wele
The foule royal, aboue you al in degre

The

The wyse & worthy, the secrete true as stele.
The whiche I haue formed, as ye may se
In euery parte, as it beste lyketh me
Ye nedeth not his thappe you to deuyse
He shal first chese, and speken in his gyse

And after hym, by order shal ye chese
After your kynde, euerych as you lyketh
And as your hap is, shal ye wynne or lese
But whiche of you, that loue most entriketh
God sende hym her, that sorest for him syketh
And therwithal, the Tercel can she cal
And sayde, my sonne the choyse is to the fal

But natheles, in this condicion
Must be the choyce, of euerych that is here
That she agree to hys election
Who so he be, that she bede bere her fere
This is our vsage alway, fro yere to yere
And who so may at this tyme haue his grace
In blisful tyme he came in to this place

With heed enclyned, & with ful humble chere
This royal Tercel spake, and caryed nought
Unto my souerayne lady, and nat my fere
I chose & chese, with wyl, hert, and thought
The formel on your hande, so wel ywrought
Whose I am al, and euer wyl her serue
Do what her lust, to do me lyue or sterue

Besechyng her of mercy, and of grace
As she that is my lady souerayne
Or let me dye, here present in thys place
For certes, longe may I not lyue in payne
For in my herte is corven euery vayne
Hauyng regarde onely to my trouthe
Hy dere herte, haue on my wo some routhe

And if I be founde to her untrewe
Disobeysaunt, or wylful negligent
I vaunt our, or in proces loue a newe
I pray to you this be my iugement
That with these foules I be al to rent
That vyle day, that she me euer fynde
To her untrewe, or in my gylte unkynde

And syth that none loueth her so wel as I
Although she neuer of loue me behet
Than ought she be myne, through her mercy
For of her bonde, can I none on her knet
For wel nor wo, neuer shal I let
To serue her, howe farre so that she wende
Say what you lyste, my tale is at an ende.

Ryght as the freshe rede rose newe
Agaynst the sómer sonne coloured is
Ryght so for shame, al waxen gan the hewe
Of this formel, whan she heard al this
Neither she answerde wel, ne sayde amis
So sore abashed was she, tyl that Nature
Sayd, doughter drede you not, I you assure

Another Tercel Egle spake anone
Of lower kynde, and sayd that shuld nat be
I loue her better than ye do, by saynt John
Or at the lest, I loue her as wel as ye
And lenger haue serued her in my degre
And if she shulde haue loued for longe louyng
To me alone had be the guerdonyng

I dare eke say, if she me fynde false
Unkynde, iangler, or rebel in any wyse
Or ielous, do me hange by the halse
And but I beare me in her seruyse
As wel as my wyt can me suffyse
Fro poynt to poynt, her honour for to saue
Take she my lyfe, and al the good I haue

The thirde tercel Egle, answerde tho
Nowe sirs, ye se the lytel leaser here
For euery foule cryeth out to be ago
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere
And eke nature her selfe, ne wyl not here
For taryeng her, nat halfe that I wolde sey
And but I speke, I must for sorowe dey

Of longe seruyce, auaunt I me nothyng
But as possible is me to dye to day
For wo, as he that hath be languischyng
Thys twenty winter, and wel it happen may
A man may serue better, and more to pay
In halfe a yere, although it were no more
Than some man doth, þ hath serued ful yore

I ne say not this by me, for I ne can
Do no seruyse, that may my lady please
But I dare say, I am her trewest man
As to my dome, and fayrest wolde her ease
At shorte wordes, tyl that dethe me crase
I wyl be hers, whether I wake or wynke
And trewe, in al that hert may bethynke

Of al my lyfe syth that day I was borne
So gentle plee, in loue or other thynge
Ne herde neuer no man me before
Who so that had leyser and connynge
For to reherse their ryote, & their spekynge

And from the morowe gan this speche laste
Til downward went the sonne wonder faste

The noyse of foules for to be delyuerde
So loude range, haue done and let vs wende
That wel wende I, ꝑ wode had al to shiuerd
Come of they cryed, alas ye wyl vs shende
Whan shal your cursed pledyng haue an ende
Howe shulde a iuge, either partye sciue
For ye or nay, without any pryue

The gose, the ducke, and the kuckowe also
So cryed kekе kekе, cucow, quekе quekе hye
Throughe myne eares, the noyse wente tho
The gose sayde than, al this nys worth a flye
But I can shape herof a remedye
And wyl say my verdyte, fayre and swithe
For water foule, who so be wrothe or blithe

And I for worme foule, said the foule cuckow
For I wyl of myn owne authorite
For cõmon spede, take on me the charge now
For to delyuer vs, it is great charite
Ye may abyde a whyle, yet perde
(Quod the Turtel) if it be your wyl
I wight may speke, it were as good be styl

I am a sede foule, one the vnworthyest
That wote I wel, and leest of connynge
But better is, that a wyghtes tonge reste
Than entremete him of suche doynge
Of whiche he neither rede can nor synge
And who so it dothe, ful foule hi self acloyeth
For office vncõmitted, ofte anoyeth

Nature, whiche that alway had an eare
To murmure of the ieudenesse behynde
with facõde voice said, hold your tõges there
And I shal soone, I hope a counsayle synde
You for to deliuer, & fro this noyse vnbynde
I charge, of euery flocke ye shal one cal
To say the verdyte of you foules al

Assented were, to this conclusyon
The birdes al, and foules of rauyne
Haue chosen first, by playne election
The Tercelet of the faucon to defyne
Al her sentence, and as hym lust to termine
And to Nature, hym they dyd presente
And she accepteth hym with glad entente

The tercelet sayd than, in this manere
Ful harde it were, to preue it by reason
Who loueth best, this gentel formel here
For euerych hath suche replicacyon
That by skylles may non be brought adoun
I can nat se, that argumentes availe
Than semeth it, there must be battayle

Al redy quod these Egle tercelles tho
Nay sirs (quod he) if that I durst it say
Ye do me wronge, my tale is not so
For sirs, taketh nat a grefe I pray
It may not be as ye wolde, in this way
Ours is the voyce, ꝑ haue ꝑ charge in hande
And to the Juges bone, ye muste stande

And therfore peace I say, as to my wit
We wolde thynke, howe that the worthyest
Of kynd by rode, and lengest had vsed it
Moost of estate, of blode the gentyliest
Were syttinge for her, if that her lest
And of these thre, she wote her self I trowe
Whiche that he be, for it is lyght to knowe

The water foules, haue their heedes layde
Togyder, and of shorte auysement
Whan euerych had his verdyte sayde
They sayd sothly, al by one assent
Howe that the goos, with the faconde gent
That so desireth, to pronounce our nede
Shal rede our tale, & prayed to god her spede

And for these water foules, tho began
The goose to speke, and in her cakelynge
She said, peace no we, take kepe euery man
And herke which a reason I shal forth bring
My witte is sharpe, I loue no taryeng
I say I rede him, tho he were my brother
But she wyl loue him, let him loue another

Lo here a partyte reason of a gose
(Quod the sperhauke neuer more shee the
Lo, suche a thing it is to haue a tonge lose
Nowe parde foole, yet were it better for the
Haue holde thy peace, than shewde thy nicete
It lyeth nat in his wit, nor in hys wyl
But sothe is sayde, a foole can nat be styl

The laughter aroste, of gentyl foules al
And eyght anone, the sede foules chosen had
The Turtel trewe, and gan her to hem cal
And prayed her to save, the sothe sad
Of this mater, and asked what she rad
And she answered, that playnly her entent
She wolde shewe, and sothly what she ment

Nay, god forbede a louer shulde chaunge
The Turtel sayd, & werre for shame al reed
Though that his lady, euer more be straūge
Yet let hym serue her alway, tyl he be deed
For sothe, I prayse not the goses reed
For tho she dyed, I wolde none other make
I wyl be hers, tyl that the herthe me take

Wel yhourded (qō the ducke) by my hat
That men shulde ..ue alway causeles
Who can a reason fynde, or wyt in that
Daunceth he mery, that is myrthles
Who shulde recke, of that is recheles
Ye quethe yet (qō the ducke) ful wel and fayre
There be mo sterres in the skye than a payre

Nowe fye churle (qō the gentil Tercelet)
Out of the dounghyl, and that worth aright
Thou canst not se, where thinge is wel beset
Thou farest by loue, as owles do by lyght
The day hē blindeth, ful wel they se by nyght
Thy kynde is of so lowe wyt the dout is
That what loue is, thou canst se nor gesse

Tho gan the cuckow put him forthe in peace
For foule that eateth worme, and sayd blyue
So I (qō he) may haue my make in peace
I recche nought, howe longe that ye stryue
Let eche of hem be soleyne al her lyue
This is my rede, sens they may nat acorde
This shorte lesson, nedeth not recorde

Ye, haue the glutton fylde his paunche
Than are we wel, sayd the Emerion
Thou murdrer of the heysugge, on & braūche
That brought the forth, thou ruful glutton
Lyue thou soleyn, wormes corrupcion
For no force is, of lacke of thy nature
So leude be thou, while the world may dure

Now peace (qō Nature) I cōmaunde here
For I haue herde al your opinion
And in effecte, yet be we never the nere
But fynally, this is my conclusyon
That she her selfe, shal haue her election
Of whom her lyst, who so be wroth or blithe
Him ꝑ she cheseth, he shall her haue as swithe

For sythe it may not here discussed be
Who loueth her best, as sayd the Tercelet
Than wol I done this fauour to her, ꝑ she
Shal haue right him, on whom her hert is set
And he her, that his hert hath on her knet
This sage I Nature, for I may not lye
To none estate, I haue none other eye

But as for counsayle, for to chose a make
Yf I were reason, than wouldē I
Counsayle you, the royal tercel take
As sayd the tercelet, ful shrylfully
As for the gentelest, and most worthy
Which I haue wrought so wel to my pleasāce
That so you it ought ben a sufficyaunce

With dredful voyce, ꝑ formel her answerde
My right ful lady, goddesse of Nature
Soth is, that I am euer vnder your yerde
As is euerych other creature
And mvst be yours, while my lyfe may dure
And therfore graunt me my first boone
And myn entent, you wel I say right soone

I graunt it you (qō she) and right anone
This formel Egle spake in this degre
Almighty quene, vnto this yere be done
I aske respyte for to auysen me
And after that to haue my choyce all fre
This al and some, that I wold speke and sey
Ye get no more, although ye do me dey

I wol not seruen Venus, ne Cupide
For sothe as yet, by no manr way
Nowe sens it may none other wayes betide
(Quod Nature) here is no more to say
Than wolde I that these foules were away
Eche with his make, for tarieng lenger here
And sayd hem thus, as ye shal after here

To you speke I, ye terceles (qō Nature)
Be ye of good herte, and serueth al thre
A yere is not so longe to endure
And eche of you payne him in his degre
For to do wel, for god wote quit is she
For you this yere, what after so befal
This entremes, is dressed fro you al

And whē this werke brought was, to an ende
To euery foule, Nature yaue his make
By euen acorde, and on her way they wende
And lorde the blisse and ioye that they make
For ech of hem gan other fer in armes take
And with her neckes, eche gan other wynde
Thanking alway, ꝑ noble goddesse of kynde

But first were chosen foules for to synge
As yere by yere, was alway her vsaunce

To synge a roundel at her departyng
To do Nature honour and pleasaunce
The note I trowe, maked was in Fraunce
The wordes were suche, as ye may here fynd
The next vers, as I nowe haue in mynde
Qui bien ayme tarde oublie.

Now welcome somer, with thy sonnes softe
That hast this wynter wethers ouerthrowe
Saynt Valentyne, thou arte ful hye on lofte
Which dryuest away, the longe nyghtes blake
Thus synge I smale foules for thy sake
Wel haue they cause for to gladen ofte
Sens eche of hem recouered hath his make
Ful blissful may they synge when they awake.

And vp the shoutyng when her songe was do
That the foules made, at her flyght away
I woke, and other bokes toke me to
To rede vpon, and yet I rede alway
I hope ywis to rede so some day
That I shal mete some thynge for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I nyl not spare.

Explicit.

The Floure of Curtesye

In Feuerier, whan the frosty Moone
Was horned, full of Phebus fery lyght
And that the gan to vnclose her streames soone
Saynte Valentyne, vpon thy blissful nyght
Of dutye, whan glad is euery wight
And foules chese, to voyde her olde sorowe
Euerych hys make, vpon the next morowe

The same tyme I herde a larke synge
Ful lusely, agayne the morowe gray
Awake ye louers, out of your slombringe
This glad morowe, in al the haste ye may
Some obseruaunce do be vnto this day
Your choyse ayen of hert to renewe
In confirming, for euer to be trewe

And ye that be of chosyng at your large
Chese lusly haye, by custome of nature
Take vpon you the blissful holy charge
To serue loue, whyle your lyfe may dure
With herte, body, and al your hely cure
For euermore, as Venus and Cupide
For you disposeth, and the god Cupide

For loue owe we playnly to obey
Vnto this lordes mygthy ordinaunce
And mercyelesse rather for to dy
Than euer in you be founden variaunce
And though your lyfe be myslyed vs greuaūce
And at your herte closet be your wounde
Beth alway one, there as ye are bounde

That whan I had herde and lysted longe
With deuout herte, the lusty melodye
Of this yeuenly comfortable songe
So agreable, as by armonye
I rose anone, and fast gan me hye
Towarde a grene, and the way take
Foules to serue, euerych chosyn his make

And yet I was ful sorowfye in languishyng
Wyn Ague was so feruent in hys here
Whan Aurora, for dyery complaynynge
Can dystyl her chrystal terres were
Vpon the soyle, with sliuer dewe so swete
For the durst for shame not apere
Vnder the lyght of Phebus beames clere

And so for anguishe of my paynes kene
And for constraynte of my sighes sore
I set me downe, vnder a laurer grene
Ful pytously, and alway more and more
As I beheld in to the boskes hore
I gan complayne myn inwarde deedly smert
That aye so sore crampysshe at myne hert

And whyle that I in my dyery payne
Sate, and beheld about on euery tre
The foules sytte, alway twayne & twayne
Thā thought I thus, alas what may this be
That euery foule hath his lyberte
Freely to chose, after hys desire
Euerych his make, thus fro yere to yere

The fely wyuerne, the tytemose also
The lytel redbrest, haue free election
To flyen where, and togyther go
Where as hem lyst, aboute enuyron
As they of kynde haue inclinacyon
And as Nature, emprentle and gyde
Of euery thyng lyst to prouyde

But

But man alone, alas the harde stounde
Ful cruelly, by kyndes ordinaunce
Constrayned is, and by statute bounde
And debarred from al suche pleasaunce
What meneth this, what is this purueyaūce
Of god aboue, agayne al right of kynde
Without cause, so narowe man to bynde

Thus may I syne and playne, alas
My woful houre, and my disauenture
That dulfully stonde in the same caas
So ferre behynde, from al helth and cure
My wounde abydeth like a surfanure
For me fortune so frely lyste dispose
My harme is hyd, that I dare not disclose

For I my herte haue set, in suche a place
Where I am neuer likely for to spede
So ferre I am hyndred from her grace
That sane dawnger, I haue none other mede
And thus alas, I not who shal me rede
Ne for myne helpe shape remedye
For Wale bouche, and for false enuye

The whiche twayne, aye stondeth in my wey
Malicyously, and false suspection
Is very cause also that I dye
Gnayng and rote of my distruction
So that I fele, in conclusyon
With her traynes, that they wol me shende
Of my labour, that doth mote make an ende

Yet or I dye, with hert, wyl, and thought
To god of loue, this auowe I make
As I best can, howe dere that it be bought
Where so it be, that I slepe or wake
While Boreas dothe the leaues slake
As I haue height, playnly tyl I sterue
For wel or wo, that I shal her serue

And for her sake, nowe this holy tyme
Saincte Valentyne, somwhat shal I write
Although so be, that I can nat tyme
Not curiously by no crafte endyte
Yet leuer I haue, that she put the wyte
In vnconnyng, than in negligence
What euer I say, of her excellence

What euer I saye, it is of dute
In sothfastnesse, and no presumpcion
This I ensure to you that shal it se
That it is al vnder correction
What I reherse in commendacion
Of her, that I shal to you as blyue
So as I can, her vertues here discryue

Ryght by exsample, as the somer sonne
Passeth the sterre, with his beames shene
And Lucifer, amonge the skyes donne
Amorowe sheweth, to boyde nyghtes tene
So verily, withouten any wene
My lady passeth, who so taketh hede
Al tho alyue, to speke of womanhede

And as the Ruby hath the soueraynte
Of riche stones, and the regalye
And the rose of swetnesse and beaute
Of freshe floures, without any lye
Ryght so in sothe, with her goodly eye
She passeth al, in bounte and fayrenesse
Of maner eke, and of gentrinesse

For she is bothe the fayrest and the beste
To reken al, in very sothfastnesse
For euery vertue is in her at reste
And furthermore, to speke of stedfastnesse
She is the rote, and of semelynesse
The very myrrour, and of gouernaunce
To al exsample, withouten varyaunce

Of porte benigne, and wonder glad of chere
Hauyng euermore her trewe aduertence
Alway to reason, so that her desire
Is brideled aye, by witte and prouidence
There to of wytte, and of hye prudence
She is the welle, aye deuoyde of pride
That vnto vertue, her seluen is the gyde

And ouer this, in her dalyaunce
Lowly she is, discrete and wyse
And goodly gladde, by attemperaunce
That euery wight, of high and lowe degre
Are glad in herte, with her for to be
So that shortly, if I shal not lye
She named is, the Floure of curtesye

And there to speke of femynite
The leste mannyshe in comparison
Goodly abashed, hauyng aye pyte
Of hem that ben in tribulacion
For she alone is consolacion
To al that arne in mischiefe and in nede
To comforte hem, of her womanhede

And aye in vertue is her bely charge
Sad and demure, and but of wordes fewe

Dredful atte of tonges that ben large
Clecheryng aye bein, that lysten to hewe
Ideue her heed, her wordes for to shewe
Dishonestly to speake of anye wyght
She deedly hateth, of hem to haue a syght

The herte of whom, so honest is and cleane
And her entent, so faythful and entere
That she ne may, for al the worlde sustene
To suffre her eares any worde to here
Of frende nor foe, neyther ferre ne nere
Amisse resowning, ꝑ hynder shulde his name
And yf she do, she weyeth reed for shame

So trewly in menyng she is in sette
Without chaungyng, or any doublenesse
For bountie and beautie, are together knette
In her persone, vnder fayrhfulnesse
For veryde she is of newfangelenesse
In herte aye one, for euer to persteuer
There she is sette, and neuer to dissteuer

I am to rude, her vertues euerychone
Conuengly to discriue and write
For wel ye wote, colour haue I none
Like her discrecion, craftely to endyte
For what I say, al it is to lyte
Wherfore to you, thus I me excuse
That I aquaynted am not with no muse

By rethorike, my style to gouerne
In her preyse and commendacion
I am to blynde, so vyliye to discerne
Of her goodnes, to make discripcyon
Saue thus I saye in conclusyon
If that I shal shortly cõmende
In her is naught, that nature can amende

For good she is, lyke to Polyxene
And in fayrenesse, to the quene Helayne
Stedfast of herte, as was Dorigene
And wekely trouthe, if I shal nat fayne
In constaunce eke ꝑ faythe, she maye attayne
To Cleopatre, and therto as sterne
As was of Troye, the white Antygone

As Hester meke, lyke Judith of prudence
Kynde as Alcest, or Marcia Catoun
And to Grisylde lyke in patyence
And Ariadne of discrecioun
And to Lucrece, that was of Rome toun
She may be lykened as for honeste
And for her faythe, vnto Penelope

To sayne Phillis, and to Hipsyphile
For innocence, and for womanhede
For stedfastnesse vnto Canace
And ouer this, to speke of goodlyhede
She passeth al that I can of rede
For worde and dede, that she naught ne fayle
Accorde in vertue, and her werkes al

For though that Dido with wytte sage
Was in her tyme stedfast of credence
Of hastynesse yet she dyd outrage
And so for Jason dyd also Medee
But my lady is so auysee
That bountie ꝑ beautie, both in her demeyne
She maketh bountie alway sourayne

This is to meane, bountie gothe afore
Led by prudence, and hath the soueraynte
And beaute foloweth, ruled by her lore
That she ne fende her in no degre
So that in one, this goodly freshe fre
Surmountyng al, withouten any were
Is good and fayre, in one persone yfere

And though that I for very ignorance
Ne may discrine her vertues by and by
Yet on this day for a remembrance
Onely supported vnder her mercy
With quakynge honde, I shal ful humbly
To her hynesse, my rudenesse for to quyte
A lytel balade, here beneth endyte

Euer as I can supprise in myne herte
Alway with feare, berwyxt drede and shame
Lest out of lose, any worde asterte
In this myrre, to make it seme lame
Chaucer is dede, that had suche a name
Of fayre makyng, that without wene
Fayrest in our tonge, as the Laurer grene

We may assay for to countrefete
Hys gay style, but it wol not be
The welle is drye, with the lycoure sweete
Bothe of Clye, and of Caliope
And fyed of al, I wol excuse me
To her that is grounde of goodlyhede
And thus I say, vnto her womanhede.

¶ Balade simple.

worthy

With al my myght, and my beſt entent
With al the faith that mighty god of kynde
Me yaue, ſith he me ſoule and knowyng ſent
I cheſe, and to this bonde euer I me bynde
To loue you beſt, while I haue lyfe & mynde
Thus herde I . . ales in the daunynge
Upon the day of ſayute Valentyne ſynge

Yet cheſe I at the beginnyng, in this entent
To loue you, though I no mercy fynde
And if you lyſt I dyed, I wolde aſſent
Is euer twynne I quicke of this lyne
Suffiſeth me to ſene your fethers pynde
Thus herde I foules in the morwynge
Upon the day of ſayn.. Valentyne ſynge

And ouer this, myne hertes luſte to bente
In honour onely of the wodde bynde
Holy I yeue, neuer to repente
In ioye or wo, where ſo that I wynde
Cofore Cupyde, with his eyen blynde
The foules all, whan Tytan dyd ſpringe
With deuout hert, me thought I herd ſinge.

Lenuoye.

Princeſſe of beautie, to you I repreſent
This ſymple dyte, rude as in makynge
Of hert & wyll, faythful in myne intent
Lyke as this day, foules herde I ſynge.

Here endeth the floure of Curteſy, and hereafter foloweth, howe pyte is deed and buryed in a gentyle herte.

Pyte that I haue ſought ſo yore ago
With hert ſore, and ful of beſy payne
That in this worlde was neuer wight ſo wo
Without death, and yf I ſhal not fayne
My purpoſe was, pyte to complayne
Upon the crueltie and tyrannye
Of loue, that for my trouth doth me dye

And that I by length of certayne yeres
Had euer in one, ſought a tyme to ſpeke
To Pyte ran I, al by ſpreynt with teeres
To prayen her on Crueltie me awreke
But or I myght with any worde out breke
Or tel her any of my paynes ſmerte
I founde her deed, and buryed in an herte

Adowne I fell, whan I ſawe the herſe
Dead as a ſtone, whyle ỹ the ſwoune me laft
But vp I roſe, with coloure ful dyuerſe
And pytouſly on her myne eyen I caſt
And nerer the coffe I gan preaſen faſt
And for the ſoule, I hope me for to pray
I was but lorne, there was no more to ſay

Thus am I ſlayne, ſythe that Pyte is deed
Alas that day that euer it ſhulde fall
What maner mã dare now hold vp his heed
To whom ſhal now any ſorowful hert cal
Nowe Crueltie hath caſt to ſlee vs al
In vdle hope, folke redeleſſe of payne
Syth ſhe is deed, to whom ſhall we cõplayne

But yet entreaſeth me thys wonder newe
That no wight wote that ſhe is deed but I
So many men as in her tyme her knewe
And yet ſhe deyde ſo ſodainly
For I haue ſought her euer full beſily
Sythe I had firſt wytte or mynde
But ſhe was deed er I coude her fynde

Aboute her herſe there ſtoden lufely
Without any mo, as thought me
Bountie, perfytly wel armed and eyrely
And freſhe Beauty, Luſt, and Jolyte
Allured maner, Youthe, and Honeſte
Ryſhonne, Eſtate, Dyſcrete, and Gouernaunce
Confordyd bothe by bonde and alyaunce

A complaynte had I wryttẽ in my honde

Ye haue put to flyte, as a fyl
But I there al this company fonde
That rather wolde al my cause spy!
Than do me helpe, I helde my playnte fyl
For to those folke without en fayle
Without pyte, there may no fyl auayle

Than leaue al vertues, saue onely pyte
Kepyng the corse, as ye haue herde me sayne
Confedred by bonde vnto Crueltie
And be assented whan I shal be slayne
And I haue put my complaynte vp agayne
For to my foes, my fyl I dare not shewe
The effecte, which saith thus in wordes fewe

O humblest of hert, hyest of reuerence
Benigne flour, crowne of vertues al
Sheweth vnto your royal excellence
Your seruaunt, if I durst me so cal
His mortal harme, in whiche he is ystal
And nought al onely for his wofulfate
But for your renome, as he shal declare

It standeth thus, that your cõtrary crueltie
Alyed is ayenst your regalye
Under colour of womanly beaute
For men shulde not knowe her tyrannye
With Bountie, Gentylesse, and Curtesy
And hath depryued you of your place
That is high beautie, apertenant to youre (grace

For kyndely, by your heritage right
Ye be annexed euer vnto bounte
And verely ye ought do your myght
To helpe trouthe in his aduersyte
Ye be also the corowne of beaute
And certes if ye want in these twayne
The worlde is lore, there is no more to sayne

Eke what auayleth maner and gentylesse
Without you, benigne creature
Shal crueltie be your gouernouresse
Alas, what herte may it longe endure
Wherfore but ye rather take cure
To breke that perylous alyaunce
Ye seem hem that ben in your obeysaunce

And further, yf ye suffre thus
Your renome is forlo in a throwe
There shal no man wete what pyte is
Alas, that euer your renome is fal so lowe
Ye be also fro your heritage ythrowe
Thy crueltie, that occupyeth your place
And we dispayred, that seken your grace

Haue mercy on me, thou Herenus quene
That you haue sought, so tenderly and sore
Let some streme of syght on me be sene
That loue and drede you euer lenger more
For sothly to sayne, I beare so sore
And though I be not comyng for to playne
For goddes loue haue mercy on my payne

My payne is this, that what so I desyre
That haue I not, ne nothyng lyke therto
And euer sterteth desyre myne herte on fyre
Eke on that other syde where that I go
What maner thyng that may encrese my wo
That haue I redy vnsought euery where
Me lacketh but my dethe, than my bere

What nedeth to shewe perrel of my payne
Sythe euery wo, that hert may bethynke
I suffre, and yet I dare not to you playne
For wel I wote, though I wade or wynke
Ye recke not whether I sterue or synke
And natheless yet my trouth I shall fulfyll
Unto my dethe, and that shal well be sene

This is to sayne, I wyl be yours euer
Though ye me slee by crueltie your fo
Algate my spyryte shal neuer dyscuer
Fro your seruyce, for any payne or wo
Syth ye be yet dred, alas that it is so
Thus for your dethe, I may wepe & playne
With hert sore, and ful of bely payne

Explicit.

La belle dame sans mercy.

Hyse in a dreme, not fully well awaked
The golden slepe me wrapped vnder his wyng
Yet nat for thy I rose, & well nygh naked
All sodaynly my selfe remembryng
Of a mater, leuyng al other thyng
Which I must do withouten more delay
For hem, which I durst not disobey

My charge was this, to translate by and by
A thyng forgyne, as parte of my penaunce
A boke, called La bel dame sans mercy
Which maister Alayne made of remembraunce
Chefe secretarie with the kyng of Fraunce
And heropon a whyle I stode musynge
And in my selfe greatly ymagenynge

What wyse I sh.ld performe ꝑ sayd proteste
Consyderyng by good aduysement
My vnconnyng, and my great symplenesse
And ayenwarde the straytecõmaundement
Which that I had, and thus in myne entent
I was vexed and tourned vp and downe
And yet at last, as in conclusyon

I cast my clothes on, and went my way
This forsayd charge vauyng in remẽbraũce
Tyl I came to a lusty grene baley
Ful of floures, to se a great pleasaunce
And so boldly with theyr benygne sustraunce
Which rede this boke, touchyng this matere
Thus I began, if it please you to here.

NOt long ago, rydyng an easy paas
I fel in thought of ioy ful desperate
With great disease a payne, sayꝑ I was
Of al louers the most vnfortunate
Syth by his darte, moste cruel ful of hate
The dethe hath take my lady and my ꝓfyte
And lefte me sole, thus dyscomforte vnsate,
Sore languysshyng, and in way of dyssteste

Than sayd I thus, it falleth me to reste
Either to ryme, or dytees for to make
And I surely to make a ful promesse
To laugh no more, but wepe in clothes blacke
My ioyful tyme (alas) now doth it slake
For in my selfe I fele no maner of ease
Let it be writtẽ, suche fortune (as I take)
Which neither me, nor non other doth please

Yf it were so, my wyl or myne entent
Constrayned were, a ioyful thyng to wryte
My penne coude neuer knowe, what it ment
To speke therof, my tonge hath no delyte
Tho with my mouthe I laugh, moche or lyte
Myne eyen thold make a countenaũce vntrue
My hert also, wold haue therof dyspyte
The weppyng teares, haue so large yssue

These sicke louers I trowe, ꝑ to hem longes
Whiche lede theyr lyfe in hope of alegeaunce
That is to say, to make balades and songes
Euery of hem, as they fele theyr greuaunce
For the that was my ioy, and my pleasaunce
Whose soule I pray god, of his mercy saue
She hath my wyl, myne hertes ordynaunce
Which lyeth here, within this tombe ygraue

Fro this tyme forth, tyme is to hold my pees
It weryeth me, this mater for to trete
Let other louers put hem selfe in prees
Theyr season is, my tyme is nowe forgete
Fortune by strength, the forcer hath vnshete
Wherin was sperde all my worldly richesse
And all the goodes, whiche that I haue gete
In my best tyme of youthe, and lustynesse

Loue hath me kepte vnder his gouernaunce
Yf I myslyd, god graunt me forgyuenesse
Yf I lyd wel, yet felte I no pleasaunce
It caused neyther ioye nor heuynesse
For whan she dyed, that was my maystres
My welfare, than made the same purchase
The dethe hath shette my bondes of witnesse
Which for nothyng myne hert shal neuer pase

In this great thought, sore troubled in minde
Alone thus rode I, al the morow tyde
Tyl at the last it happed me to fynde
The place, wherin I cast me to abyde
Whan that I had no further for to ryde
And as I went, my lodgynge to puruey
Right soone I herde, a lytel me besyde
In a garden, where mynstrels gan to play

With that anone, I went me backer more
My selfe and I, me thought we were ynowe
But twayne that wer my frẽdes here before
Had me espyed, and yet I wote not howe
They came for me, awaywarde I me drowe
Somwhat by force, somwhat by her requeste
That in no wyse, I coude my selfe rescowe
But nedes I muste come in and se the feste

At my cõmyng, the ladyes euerychone
Bad me welcome, god wote right gentylly
And made me chere, euery one by one
A great dele better than I was worthy
And of theyr grace, shewed me great curtesy
To good disport, bycause I shuld not mourne
That day I bode styll in theyr company
Whyche was vnto me a gracyous sojourne

The bordes were spred, in right lytel space

The ladyes sat,ete as hem semed best
There were no beerdy seruauntes in the place
But chosen men,right of the goodlyest
And some eyer wer,peraunture most fretheste
That sawe theie iudges full demure
Without semblaunt,eyther to most or lest
Notwithstandyng,they had hem vnder cure

Among al other,one I gan espy
Whiche in great thought,ful ofte came & went
As one that had ben rauyshed vtterly
In his language,nat greatly dylygent
His countenaunce he kept vp great tourment
But his desyre farre passed his reason
For euer his eye,went after his entent
Ful many a tyme,whan it was no season

To make chere,sore him selfe he payned
And outwardly he fayned great gladnesse
To synge also,byforce he was constrayned
For no plesaunce,but very shamfastnesse
For the complaynt of his most heuynesse
Came to his power,alway without request
Lyke as the sowne of byrdes doth expresse
Whan they synge loude,in frythe or in forest

Other there were,that serued in the hal
But none lyke him,as after myne aduyse
For he was pale,and somwhat seane withal
His speche also trymbled in fereful wyse
And euer alone,but whan he dyd seruyse
Al blacke he ware,& no deuyse but playne
Me thought by him,as my wyt coude suffyse
His hert was nothing in his owne demeyne

To fest hem all,he dyd his diligence
And wel he coude,tyght as it semed me
But euermore,whan he was in presence
His chere was done,it nolde none other be
His schole mayster had suche authoure
That all the whyle he bode styl in the place
Speke coude he nat,but vpon her beaute
He loked styl,with a right pytous face

Wold that his heed he tourned at the last
For to beholde the ladyes euerychone
But euer in one,he set his eye stedfast
Amber,which his thought was most vpon
For of his eyen,the shot I knewe anone
Which fereful was,& righte hable requestes
Thus to my selfe I sayd,by god alone
Aparte one was I,or that I saw theise iestes

Out of the preste he went ful esely
To make stable his heuy countenaunce
And wote ye wel,he syghed wonderly
For his sorowes and wofui remembraunce
Than in him selfe,he made his ordynaunce
And forthwithal came to bryng in the messe
But for to iuge,his most wofui penaunce
God wote it was a pytous entremesse

After dyner anone,they hem auaunced
To daunce aboue the folke euerychone
And forthwithall,this heuy man he daunced
Somtyme with twaine,& somtime with one
Vnto hem al,his chere was after one
Now here nowe there,as fel by auenture
But euer amonge,he drewe to her alone
Whiche he most dred,of lyuyng creature

To myne aduyse,good was his purueyaūce
whan he her chose,to his maystres alone
If that her hert were set to his plesaunce
As moch as was her beauteous persone
For who so euer setteth his trust vpon
The reporte of the eyen,withouten more
He myght be dred,and grauen vnder stone
Or euer he shulde,his hertes ease restore

In her faled nothynge,that I coude gesse
One wyse nor other,preuy nor perte
I garyson she was,of all goodlynesse
To make a trouwer,for a louers herte
Wyght yonge & freshe,a woman ful couerte
Assured wele of porte,and eke of chere
Wele at her ease,withouten wo or smerte
Al vnderneth the standerde of daungere

To se the fest,it wery ed me ful sore
For heuy love doth sore the hert tranayle
Out of the preste,I me withdrawe therfore
And set me downe alone behynde a trayle
Ful of leues,to se a great meruayle
With grene wythes ybounden wonderly
The leues were so thycke withouten fayle
That thyroughout,no man might me espy

To this lady he came ful curtesly
Whā he thought tyme to daūce wt her a trace
Set in an herber,made ful plesauntly
They rested hem fro thens but a lytel space
Nygh hem were none,of a certayne compace
But onely they,as farre as I coude se
Saue the trayle,there I had chose my place
There was no more betweene hem two & me

I heard

I heard the louer syghyng wonder sore
For aye the more, the sorer it him sought
His inwarde payne he coude not kepe in store
Nor for to speke, so hardy was he nought
His leche was nere, ꝑ greter was his thought
He mused sore, to conquere his desyre
For no man may to more penaūce be brought
Than in his hert to bring him to the fyre

The hert began to swel within his chest
So sore strayned, for anguyshe & for payne
That al to peces almost it to brest
Whan bothe at ones, so sore it dyd constraine
Desyre was bolde, but shame it gan refraine
That one was large, the other was ful close
No lytel charge was laide on him certayne
To kepe suche werre, and haue so many foes

Ful often tymes to speke, him selfe he payned
But shamfastnesse & drede, sayd euer nay
Yet at the last, so sore he was constrayned
Whan he ful longe had put it in delay
To his lady, right thus than gan he say
With dredeful voyce, weppyng, halfe in a rage
For me was purueyed, an vnhappy day
Whan I fyrst had a sight of your vysage

I suffre payne god wote, ful hote brennynge
To cause my deth, al for my true ſ[illegible]se
And I se wel, ye recke therof nothyng
Nor take no hede of it, in no kynde wyse
But whan I speke after my best aduyse
Ye set it at nought, but make therof a game
And thoughe I serue, so great an enterpryse
Yet peyseth not your worshyp nor your fame

Alas, what shulde it be to you preiudyce
Yf that a man do loue you faythfully
To your worshyp, eschewyng euery vyce
So am I yours, and wyl be verily
I chalenge nought of right, and reason why
For I am hole submyt vnto your seruyce
Right as you lyst it be, right so wyl I
To binde my selfe, where I was in fraūchise

Lamant.

Though it be so, that I can nat deserue
To haue your grace, but alway lyue in drede
Yet suffre me, you for to loue and serue
Without̄e maugre, of your most goodlyhede
Both fayth & trouth I gyue your womānhede
And my seruyce without any calynge
Loue hath me bounde, without wage or mede
To be your man, and leue al other thynge

La dame.

Whan this lady had herde al this language
She gaue answere, ful softe and demurely
Without chaungyng of colour or courage
Nothyng in hast, but mesurably
Me thinketh syr, your thought is great foly
Your purpose ye nought, your labour for to cese
For thynketh not, whiles ye lyue and I
In this mater, to set your hert in pease

Lamant.

There may none make the peace, but onely ye
Which are the grounde & cause of al this war
For with your eyen, the letters written be
By which I am defyed and put a far
Your plesaunt loke, my very lode star
Was made herande, of thylke same defyaūce
Whiche vtterly behyght me for to barre
My faythful trust, and al myne affyaunce

La dame.

To lyue in wo, he hath great fantasy
And of his herte also slypper holde
That onely for beholdyng of an eye
Can nat abyde in peace, as reason woulde
Other or me, if ye lyst ye may beholde
Oure eiē are made to loke, whi shuld we spare
I take no kepe, neyther of yonge ne olde
Who seleth smerte, I counsayle him beware

Lamant.

If it be so, one hurte another fore
In his defaute, that seleth the greuaunce
Of very right, a man may do no more
Yet reason woulde it were in remembraunce
And syth fortune onely by her chaunce
Hath caused me to suffre al this payne
By your beaute, with al the circumstaunce
Why lyst ye haue me, in so great disdayne

La dame.

To your persone, ne haue I no dysdayne
Nor neuer had trewly, ne nought wyl haue
Nor right great loue, nor hatred in certayne
Nor your counsayle to know, so god me saue
Yf suche loue be in your mynde ygraue
That lytel thyng, may do you displesaunce
You to begyle, or make you for to raue
I wyl nat cause, no suche encombraunce

Lamant.

What euer it be, ꝑ me hath thus purchased
No enuyne hath nat dyscryued me certayne
But feruent loue, so sore hath me vchased
That I vnware, am caught in your chayne
And syth so is, as fortune lyst ordayne
If my welfare, is in your handes fal
In eschewyng of more myscheuous payne

Who lowest dyeth, his care is leest of al

La dame.

This sickenesse is right easy to endure
But fewe people, it causeth for to dye
But what they meane, I knowe it very sure
Of more comforte, to drawe the remedy
Suche be there now, playnyng ful pytously
That erie god wote, nat aither greteth paine
And if so be, loue hurte so greuously
Lesse harme it were, one sorowful thā twayn

Lamant.

Alas madame, if that it myght you please
Moche better it were, by waye of gentylnesse
Of one sory, to make twayne wel at ease
Than hym to destroye that lyueth in distresse
For my desyre is, neyther more nor lesse
But my seruyce, to do for your pleasaunce
In eschewyng al maner doubleneesse
To make two ioyes, in stede of one grenaūce

La dame.

Of loue I seke, neither pleasaūce nor ease
Nor haue therin no great affyaunce
Though ye be sicke it doth me nothing please
Also I take no hede of your pleasaunce
Chese who so wyl, her hertes to auaunce
Free am I nowe, and free wyl I endure
To be ruled by mannes gouernaunce
For erthly good, Nay, that I you ensure

Lamant.

Loue, which ꝑ ioye & sorow doth departe
Hath set the ladyes out of al seruage
And largely doth graunt hem for her parte
Lordshyp and rule of euery maner of age
The poore seruaūt, nought hath of auaūtage
But what he may get onely by purchesse
And he that ones, to loue doth his homage
Ful often tymes, dere bought is the richesse

La dame.

Ladyes be nat so symple, thus I mene
So dul of wyt, so sotted in foly
That for wordes, which sayd be of ꝑ splene
In fayre langage, payated ful pleasauntly
Which ye and mo, holde scholes of dayly
To make hem al, great wonders to suppose
But some they can away, theyr herdes wyse
And to fayre speche, lyghtly theyr eres close

Lamant.

There is no man, that langieth busyly
And setteth his hert, & al his mynde therfore
That by reason, may playne so pytously
As he that hath moche heuynesse in store
Whose heed is hole, and fayre that it is fore
Who fayreth there, is harde to kepe in mewe
But thought, whyche is vnfayred euermore
The wordes pryueth, as the workes shewe

La dame.

Loue is fabrel, and hath a great aduyse
Sharpe i wordyng, i gabbing great pleasaūce
And can him benge, of suche as by dyscryse
Wold erie and know, his secrete gouernaūce
And maketh hem to obey his ordynaunce
By cheerful wayes, as in hem is supposed
But whan they fal into repentaunce,
Than in a rage, her rountayle is disclosed

Lamant.

Sith for as moche, as god and the nature
Hath auaunced loue, to so hye degre
Moche sharpe is the poyne, thus am I sure
Yet greueth more the fame, where euer it be
Who hath no colde, of heate hath no deynte
The one for that other, asked is expryesse
And of pleasaunce, knoweth non certeyne
But it be one, in thought and bysynesse

La dame.

As for pleasaunce, it is nat alway one
That you thinke sweete, I thinke it bitter payne
Ye may nat me cōstrayne, nor yet rigte none
After your lust to loue, that is but vayne
To chalenge loue by right, was neuer seyne
But herte assent, before bonde and promyse
For strength and force, may not attayne
I wyl ther stondeth entrelled in fraunchyse

Lamant.

Right fayre lady, god mote I neuer pleas
Yf I seke other right in this case
But for to shewe you playnly my desease
And your mercy to abyde, & eke your grace
If I purpose your honour to deface
Or euer dyd, god and fortune me shende
And that I neuer busyly gladly purchace
One onely ioye, vnto my lyues ende

La dame.

Ye and other, that sweare suche othes fast
And so condempne, and curssen to and fro
Ful sykerly ye were your othes last
No lenger than the wordes ben ago
And god, and eke his sayntes laughe also
In suche sweryng, there is no stedfastnesse
And these wemen that haue ful trust therto
After they wepe and waylen in distresse

Lamant.

He hath no corage of a man trewly
That secheth pleasaunce, worthyp to dispyse
Nor to be called forth, is not worthy
The erth to touche, ꝑ ayre in no kyns wyse
A truly hert, a mouth without feynyse

Thus

Thus by the strength of euery maner name
And who that layeth hys fayth for lytel prise
He leseth bothe his worshyp and hys fame

La dame

I cursed herte, a mouth that is curteyse
Ful wel ye wote they be not accordynge
Yet fayned chere, sight some may hem apeyse
Where of malyce is set al her workynge
Ful false semblant they bere, & true semynge
Her name, her fame, her tonges but fayned
Worshyp in hem is put in forgetynge
Nought repented, nor in no wise complained

Lamant.

Who thynketh yl, no good may hym befal
God of his grace graunt ech man his desyre
But for hys loue, amonge your thoughtes al
Is thynke vpon my wofol sorowes smert
For of my payne, whether your tender hert
Of swete pyte, be not therwith agreued
And of your grace, so me were discouert
That by your meane, some shuld I be releued

La dame.

I lightsome hert, a folly of pleasaunce
Are muche better, the lesse whyle they abyde
They make you thinke, a dayg you in a traūce
But that sickenesse, wyl sone be remedyde
Respite your thought, and put al this asyde
Ful good disporte werieth me al day
To helpe nor hurt, my wyl is nat ^plyde
Who troweth me nat, I let hem passe away

Lamant.

Who hath a byrde, a faucon, or a hounde
That folowyth hym for loue in euery place
He cherisheth hym, & kepeth hym ful sounde
Out of his syght, he wyl not hym enchace
And I that set my wittes in thys race
On you alone, without en any chaūge
Am put vnder, moche farther out of grace
And lesse set by, than other that be straunge

La dame.

Though I make chere to euery man about
For my worshyp, & for myne owne fraūchyse
To you I wyl do so, without doute
In eschewinge al maner pretudyse
For wote ye wel, loue is so lytel wyse
And in byleue, so lyghtly wyl be brought
That he taketh al at hys owne deuyse
Of thyng god wote, ỹ serueth him of nought

Lamant.

Yf I by loue, and by my true seruyse
Lese ỹ good chere ỹ straungers haue alway
Wherof shal serue my trouth in any wise
Lesse than to hym, that cometh & goth alday
Whiche holdeth of you nothyng, ỹ is no nay
Also in you is lost, as to my semynge
Al curtesy, whiche of reason wyl say
That loue for loue, were lawful destynge

La dame.

Curtesye is alyed wonder nere
To worshyp, whiche him loueth tenderly
And he wyl not be bounde for no prayere
Nor for no gystes, I say you verely
But this good chere, departe ful largely
Where hym lyketh, as hys conceyte wyl fal
Guerdon constrayned a gyfte don thankfully
These twayn cā neuer accorde nor neuer shal

Lamant.

As for guerdon I seke none in this cace
For that desert, to me it is to hye
Wherfore I aske your pardone & your grace
Sith me behoueth bothe, or your mercy
To gyue the good where it wanteth truely
That were reason, and a curteyse manere
And to your owne much better were worthy
Thā to straūgers, to shewe hem lourly chere

La dame.

What cal ye good, fayn wolde I that I wist
That pleaseth one, another sinerteth sore
But of his owne, to large is he that lyst
Gyue much, and lese his good name therfore
One shulde not make a graunt, lytel ne more
But the request were right wel accordinge
Yf worshyp be not kepte and set before
Al that is lefte, is but a lytel thynge

Lamant.

In to this worlde was founden neuer none
Nor vnder heuen creature ybore
Nor neuer shal, saue onely your persone
To whō your worshyp coucheth halfe so sore
But me whiche haue no season lesse ne more
Of youthe ne age, but syl in your seruyce
I haue no eyen, no wit, nor mouth in store
But al be gyuen to the same office

La dame.

A ful great charge hath he without en fayle
That his worshyp keepeth in syckernesse
But in daunger he setteth hys trauayle
That lesseth it with others buysynesse
To hym that longeth honour and noblesse
Upon none other shulde nat be awayte
For of his owne, so muche hath he the lesse
That of other, muche folowyth the conceyte

Lamant.

Yf your eyen hath set ỹ pyte, which that I fele
Ar stikyng my hert, that where so euer I go
Yf I do thynge, that sowneth vnto wele

Lordes must it come from you, & fro no mo
Fortune wyl this, that I for wele or woo
My lyfe endure, your mercy abydinge
And very right wyl, that I thinke also
Of your worthyp, aboue al other thinge

La dame

To your worthyp se wel, for that is nede
That ye spende not your seasons al in vayne
As touchyng myn, I rede you take no hede
By your folly, to put your selfe in payne
To ouercome is good, and to restrayne
An herte, whiche is discryued follyly
For worse it is to breake than bowe certayne
Better bowe, than to fal sodaynly

Lamant.

Nowe fayre lady thinke, sith it first began
That loue hath set myne hert vnder his cure
It neuer might, ne trewely I ne can
None other serue, whyle I shal here endure
In most fre wyse, therof I make you sure
Which may not be withdrawe, this is no nay
I must abyde al maner aduenture
For I may neither put to nor take away

La dame.

I holde it for no gyfte in sothfastnesse
That one offreth, where it is forsake
For suche a gyft is abandonyng expresse
That with worthyp ayen may not be take
He hath an herte ful fel that lyste to make
A gyfte lightly, that put is to refuse
But he is wyse, that such conceyte wil slake
So that hym nede, neither to study ne muse

Lamant.

He shulde not muse, ꝑ hath his seruice spent
On her, whiche is a lady honourable
And if I spende my tyme to that entent
Yet at the lest, I am not reprouable
Of fayned herte, to thinke I am vnable
Or I mistoke, whan I made this request
By whiche loue hath of enterprise notable
So many hertes gotten by conquest

La dame.

If that ye lyste do after my counsayle
Seche a fayrer, and of more higher fame
Whiche in seruice of loue, wyl you preuayle
After your thought, accordyng to the same
Ye hurteth bothe his worthyp & his name
That follyly, for twayn hi selfe wyl trouble
And he also leseth his after game
That surely can not set his poyntes double

Lamant.

This your counsayle, by ought that I can se
Is better sayd than done, to myne aduyse
Though I beleue it not, forgeue it me
Myn hert is suche, so hole without feynteyse
That I ne may gyue credence in no wyse
To thing, which is not sowonyng vnto trouth
Other counsayle I se, be but fantasyse
Saue of your grace, to the we pyte and ruth

La dame.

I holde hym wyse that wordeth no foly
And whan hym lyst, can leue and part therfro
But in comming, he is to lerne tre wyly
That wolde him selfe conduite, & can not so
And he that wil not after counsayle do
His sure he putteth in to disperaunce
And al the good that shulde fal him to
Is lost and deed, clene out of remembraunce

Lamant.

Yet wol I shewe this matter faythfully
Whyles I lyue, what euer be my chaunce
And if it hap, that in my truthe I dye
Than deth shal do me no displesaunce
But whan that I, by your harde sufferaunce
Shal dye so true, and with so great a payne
Yet shal it do me moche the lesse grenaunce
Than for to lyue a false louer certayne

La dame.

Of me get ye right nought, this is no fable
I wyl to you be neither harde nor strayte
And right wyl, not no man customable
To thynke ye shulde, be sure of my conceyte
Who seeth ech sorowe, his be the receyte
Other counsayle can I not fele nor se
Nor for to lerne, I cast me not to awayte
Who wyl therof, let hym assay for me

Lamant.

Dues must it be assayde, that is no nay
With suche as be of reputacion
And of true loue, the right honour to pay
Of free hertes gotten by dewe raunsome
For fre wyl holdeth this opynion
That it is great duresse and discomforte
To kepe a herte in so strayte a prison
That hath but one body for his disporte

La dame.

I knowe so many causes meruaylous
That I must nede of reason thynke certayne
That suche auenture is wonder perylous
And yet wel more, the comyng backe agayne
Good or worshyp, therof is seldome sene
Where I ne wyl make suche aray
As for to fynde a plesaunce, but a batayne
Whan it shal cost so dere the first assay

Lamant.

Ye haue no cause to dout of this mater

For

For you to meue with no suche fantasyse
To put me fatre al out as a straunger
For your goodnesse can thinke & wel aduise
That I haue made apryse in euery wise
By whiche my truthe sheweth open euidence
By longe abydynge, and my trewe seruice
May wel be knowen by playne experience

La dame.

Of bery ryght he may be called trewe
And so muste he be take in euery place
That can discerne, and let as he ne knewe
And kepe the good, if he it may purchase
For who that prayeth, or swereth in any case
Ryght wel ye wote, in ỳ no trouth is preued
Suche hath there ben, and are, ỳ getten grace
And lese it sone, whan they haue it acheued

Lamant.

If truthe me cause, by vertue souerayne
To shewe good loue, & alway fynde contrary
And cherisshe ỳ, which sleeth me with ỳ payne
This is to me a louely aduersary
Whan ỳ pyte, which longe on slepe doth tary
Hath set the fyne of al my heuynesse
Yet her comforte to me moste necessary
Shal set my wyl more sure in stablenesse

La dame.

The woful wight, what may he thinke or say
The contrary of al ioye and gladnesse
A syche body, hys thought is alway
From hem that felen no sore nor sickenesse
Thus hurtes ben of dyuers busynesse
Whiche loue hath put to great hyndraunce
And truthe also, put in forgetfulnesse
Whan they ful sore begyn to syghe askaunce

Lamant.

Now god defende, but he be harmlesse
Of al worshyp or good that may befal
That to werst tourneth by hys lewdnesse
A gyfte of grace, or any thynge at al
That hys lady vouchesafe vpon him cal
Or cherisheth hym in honourable wyse
In that defaute, what euer he be that fal
Deserueth more than deth to suffre twyse

La dame.

There is no fuge ystette an suche trespace
By which of right, loue may recouered be
But curseth fast, another dothe manace
Yet dyeth none, as fatre as I can se
But kepe her course alway in one degre
And euer more, their labour doth encrease
To bring ladyes by their great subtelte
For others gylte, in sorowe and disease

Lamant.

Al be it so, one dothe so great offence
And is not deed, nor put to no iustyce
Ryght wel I woot hym gayneth no defence
But he must ende in ful mischeuous wyse
And al euer sayd, god wyl hym dispyse
For falshed is ful of cursednesse
That his worshyp may neuer haue ẽterprise
Where it reygneth, & hath the wylfulnesse

La dame

Of that haue they no great fere nowe a dayse
Such as wyl say and maynteyne it therto
That stedfast truthe is nothing for to prayse
In hem that kepe it longe in wele or wo
Their busy herres passen to and fro
They be so wel reclaymed to the lure
So wel lerned hem to withholde also
And al to chaunge, whē loue shuld best endure

Lamant.

Whan one hath set his herte in stable wise
In suche a place, as is bothe good and trewe
He shulde not flyt, but do forth hys seruice
Alway withouten chaunge of any newe
As sone as loue begynneth to remewe
Al plesaunce gothe anone in lytel space
As for my partie that shal I eschewe
Whyle the soule abydeth in hys place

La dame.

To loue truely, there as it ought of ryght
Ye may not be mystaken doutlesse
But ye be soule disceyued in your syght
By lyght vnderstandynge, as I gesse
Yet may ye wel repete your busynesse
And to reason haue some attendaunce
Moch better than to abide by foly simplenes
The feble socour of disperaunce

Lamant.

Reason, counsayle, wisedome, & good aduyse
Ben vnder loue arested euerychone
To whiche I can accorde in euery wise
For they be not rebel, but styl as a stone
Their wyl and myne, be medled al in one
And therwith bounden with so strong a cheine
That as in hem, departynge shal be none
But pyte breake the mighty bonde atwayne

La dame

Ye loue not your selfe, what euer ye be
That in loue manor for gette in euery place
And of your two, if ye haue no pyte
Others pyte byfore ye not to purchase
But be fully assured, as in thys case
I am alway vnder one ordynaunce
To haue better trust not after grace
And al that leueth, take to your plesaunce

Lamant

Lamant.

I haue my hope so suer and so stedfast
That suche a lady shulde not lacke pyte
But nowe alas, it is shyt vp so fast
That daūger sheweth on me his cruelte
And if she se the vertue fayle in me
Of trewe seruyce, though she do fayle also
No wonder were, but this is my sorete
I must suffre, whiche way that euer it go

La dame.

Leaue this purpose I rede you for the best
For the lenger ye hope, it is in vayne
The lesse ye gette, as of your heres rest
And to reioyce it shal you neuer attayne
Whan ye abide good hope to make you faine
Ye shal be founde aforced in dotage
And in the ende, ye shal knowe for certayne
Hope shal pay the wretches for her wage

Lamant.

Ye say as falleth most for your plesaunce
And your power is great, al thys I se
But hope shall neuer out of my remembraunce
By whiche I fele so great aduersyte
For whan nature hath set in you plente
Of al goodnesse, by vertue and by grace
He neuer assembled hem, as semed me
To put pyte out of hys dwellyng place

La dame.

Pyte of right ought to be resonable
And to no wight do no great displaunaunce
There as is nede, it shulde be profytable
And to the pitous shewing no domage
If a lady wyl do so great outrage
To shewe pyte and cause her owne debate
Of suche pyte cometh dispitous rage
And of suche loue, also right deedly hate

Lamant.

To comforte hem that lyue al comfortiesse
That is no harme, but cōforte to your name
But ye that haue a herte of suche duresse
And a fayre lady I muste affirme the same
If I durst say, ye wisse al thys defame
By cruelte, whiche sitteth you ful yl
But if pyte, whiche may al this atrame
In your high herte may rest and tary styl

La dame,

What euer he be that sayth he loueth me
And paraventure I leue wel it be so
Ought he be wrothe, or shulde I blamed be
Though I byd not as he wolde haue me do
If I medled with suche or other mo
It might be called pyte mercyesse
And afterwarde if I shulde lyue in wo
Than to repent, it were to late I gesse

Lamant.

O marble herte, and yet more harde parde
Whiche mercy may not perce for no labour
More stronge to bowe than is a mighty tre
What auayleth you to shewe so great rigour
Pleaseth it you more to se me dye this hour
Before your eyen, for your disporte and play
Than for to shewe some comforte a socour
To respyte dethe, whiche chaseth me alway

La dame.

Of your distresse, ye may haue allegraunce
And as for myne, I let it auer slake
Also ye shal not dye for my plesaunce
Nor for your heale, I can no surety make
I wyl not hurte my selfe for others sake
Wepe they, laugh they, or sing they, I wacke
For this matter, for wyl I vndertake
That none of hem shal make therof auaunce

Lamant.

I can not shyl of loue by god alone
I haue cause to wepe in your presence
And wel ye wote, auauntour am I none
For certaynly, I loue better science
One shulde not loue by his heres credence
But he were sure to kepe it secretly
For a vauntour is of no reuerence
Whan that his tonge is his most enemy

La dame.

Male bouche in courte, hath great cōmaundement
Eche man studieth to say the worst he may
These false loures, in this ryme now present
They serue best to iangle as a Jay
The most secrete ywis, yet some men say
Howe he mistrusted is in some partie
Wherfore to ladies whan so mē speke or say
It shulde be byleued in no wyse

Lamant.

Of good and yl shal be, and is alway
The worlde is suche, þ ryght is not al playne
They þ be good, þ profe sheweth euery day
And other wyse great villony certayne
It is reason, thoughe one his tonge disdayne
With cursed speche, to do hym selfe a shame
That suche refuse, shuld wrōgfully remaine
Upon the good renoumed in their fame

La dame.

Suche as be nought, whā they here tidinges
That eche trespas shal lightly haue pardon
They that pursuen to be good and trewe
Wyl not set by none yl disposicyon
To continue in euery good condicyon
They are the first that fallen in domage

And

And ful frely the hertes hadandon
To lytel sayth, with softe and sayre langage

Lamant.

Nowe knowe I wel of very certaynte
If one do truely, yet shal he be shente
Sith al maner of iustyce and pyte
Is banished out of a ladies entente
I can not se, but al is at one stente
The good, the yl, the vice, & eke the vertue
Suche as be good, such haue the punyshmēt
For the trespace of hem that lyue vntrue

La dame.

I haue no power you to do grenaunce
Nor to punishe none other creature
But to eschewe the more encombraunce
To kepe vs from you al, I holde it sure
False semblaunce, hath a face ful demure
Lightly to catche these ladyes in a wayte
Wherfore we must, if we wyl here endure
Make right good watch, lo this is my cōceite

La mant.

Sith that of grace, a goodly worde not one
May nowe be had, but alway kepte in store
I appele to god, for he may here my mone
Of the dureſſe, whiche greueth me so sore
And of pyte, I complayne furthermore
Whiche he forgate, in al his ordinaunce
Or els my lyfe to haue ended before
Whiche so soone am put out of remēbraunce

La dame.

My herte nor I, haue done you no forfeyte
By whiche ye shulde complayne in any kinde
Nothing hurteth you, but your owne cōceyte
Be inge your selfe, for so ye shal it fynde
Thus alway let this synke in your mynde
That your desire shal neuer recouered be
Ye noy me sore, in wastyng al this wynde
For I haue sayd ynough, as semeth me

Lamant.

This woful man rose vp in al his payne
And so departed with weping countenaunce
His woful herte, almost to brast in twayne
Ful lyke to dye, walkyng forth in a traunce
And sayd bethe come forth, thy selfe auaunce
Or that myn herte forgete hys properte
And make shorter al this woful penaunce
Of my poore lyfe, ful of aduersite

Fro thēs he went, but whither wist I nought
Nor to what parte he drewe in sothfastnesse
But he no more was in his ladyes thought
For to the dannce anone she gan her dresse
And afterwarde, one tolde me thus expresse
He rent his heer, for anguiſhe and for payne
And in hym selfe toke so great heuynesse
That he was deed within a day or twayne

Lenuoy.

The true louers thus I beseche you al
Such auētures sye hem in every wyse
And as people defamed ye hem cal
For they truely do you great prejudice
His castelles stronge stuffed with ordinaunce
For they haue had longe tyme by their office
The hole countre of loue in obeysaunce

And ye ladies, or what estate ye be
Of whom wurthyp hath chose his dwellyng (place
For goddes loue do no suche cruelte
Nor in no wyse ne foule not the trace
Of her that here is named ryght wisly
Whiche by reason me semeth in this cace
May be called, La belle dame sans mercy.

Go lytel boke, god sende the good passage
Chese well thy way, be symple of manere
Loke thy clothyng be lyke thy pilgremage
And specially let thys be thy prayere
Unto hem al, that they wyl rede or here
Where thou art wrong after her helpe to cal
The to correcte in any parte or al

Pray hem also with thyne humble seruice
Thy boldnesse to pardon in this cace
For els thou arte not able in no wyse
To make thy selfe appeare in any place
And furthermore beseche hem of her grace
By her fauour and supportacyon
To take in gre this rude translacyon

The whiche god wote standeth full destitute
Of eloquence, of meter, and colours
Lyke as a best naked without refute
Upon a playne to abyde al maner showers
I can no more, but aske of hem socours
At whose request ꝑ were made in this wise
Cōmaundynge me with body and seruise

Right thus I make an ende of this prosses
Beseechynge hym, that al hath in balaunce
That no true man be dered causelesse
As this man was, which is of remembraūce
And al that done her faythful obseruaunce
And in her trouth purpose hem to endure
I pray god sende hem better auenture.

Explicit.

Of quene Anneli-da and falſe Arcite,

THou fiers God of armes Mars the rede
That in thy frosty countre called Trace
Within thy grysly temples ful of drede
Honoured art as patron of that place
With the Bellona Pallas ful of grace
Be present, and my songe continewe and gye
At my begynnyng thus to the I crye

For it ful depe is sonken in mynde
With pytous herte in Englyshe to endite
This olde story, in latyn whiche I fynde
Of quene Annelida and falle Arcite
That elde, whiche al can frete and byte
And it hath freten many a noble story
Hath nigh devoured out of our memory

Be fauourable eke thou Polymnia
On Pernaso that hath thy sisters glade
By Elycon, not farre from Cirsa
Singest with voyce memorial in the shade
Under the laurer, whiche that may not fade
And do that I my thyp to hauen wynne
First folowe I Stace, & after hym Corinne

Iamq; domos patrias Cithie post aspera gestis,
Pyrea laurigero suburente Thesea curru
Letifice plausus missusq; ad sidera vulgi

When Theseus with warres longe & grete
The aspre folke of Cithe hath ouercome
The laurer crowned in his chayre golde bete
Home to his countre houses is ycome
For whiche the people blisful al and some
Do cryden, that to the sterres it wente
And hym to honouren dyd al her entente

Before this duke, in signe of victorie
The trompes come, and in his baner large
The ymage of Mars, and in token of glorie
Men might se of tresour many a charge
Many a bright helme, & many a spere & targe
Many a fresshe knight, & many a blisful route
On hyght and on fote, in al the pride aboute

Ipolyta his wyfe, the hardy queene
Of Cithya, that he conquered had
With Emelie her yonge suster shene
Fayre in a chare of golde he with hym lad
That al ỳ grouide about her chare the spad
With brightnesse of beautie in her face
Fulfylled of largesse and of grace

With his triumphe & laurer crowned thus
In al the floure of fortunes yeuyng
Lete I this noble prince Theseus
Towarde Athenes in his way rydyng
And fonde I wol in shortly to bring
The fyre way of that I gan to write
Of quene Annelida and false Arcite

Mars ỳ through his furious course of yre
The olde wrathe of Juno to fulfyl
Hath set the peoples hertes both on fyre
Of Thebes & Grece, al eueriche other to kyl
With blody speares rested neuer styl (both
But thyder now here now there amóge ber
That euerich other slew, so were they wroth

For whan Amphiorax and Tydeus
Ipomedon, and Parthynope also
Were dred, and slayne proude Campaneus
And whan ỳ wretched Thebans byrthe two
Were slayne, and kyng Adrastus home ago
So desolate stode Thebes and so bare
That no wight coude remedy of his care

And whan the olde Creon gan espye
Howe ỳ the blode royal was brought adoun
He helde the cyte by his tyrannye
And dyd the genrys of that regioun
To ben his frendes, and dwel in the toun
So what for loue of hym, and what for awe
The noble folke were to the towne ydrawe

Amonge al these Anelyda the quene
Of Ermonye, was in that towne dwellynge
That fayrer was than the sonne shene
Throughout ỳ world so gã her name spryng
That her to se had euery wight lykyng
For as of trouthe is there none her lyche
Of al the women in this worlde ryche

Yonge was this quene, of twenty yere olde
Of myddle stature, and of suche fayrenesse
That nature had a ioye her to beholde
And for to speken of her stedfastnesse
She passed hath Penelope, and Lucresse

And

god shortly if she shal ben comprehended
In her myght nothynge ben amended

This Theban knyght the sothe to sayne
Was yonge, and therto withal a lusty knight
But he was double in loue, & nothing playne
And subtyl in that craftes ouer any wyght
And with his conuyng wan this lady bright
For so ferforth he gan her trouth assure
That she him trusteth ouer any creature

What shuld I sayne, she loueth Arcyte so
That whan that he was absent any throwe
Anon her thought her herte brast a two
For in her syght to her he bare him lowe
So that she wende haue al his herte yknowe
But he was false, it nas but fayned chere
As nedeth not suche craftes men to lere

But neuertheless ful mykel besynesse
Had he, er that he might his lady wynne
And swore he wolde dyen for distresse
Or from his wytte he sayd he wolde twynne
Alas the whyle, for it was routhe and synne
That she vpon his sorowes wolde rewe
But nothig thinketh the false as doth ỳ trewe

Her fredom founde Arcyte in suche manere
That al was his, that she hath mo the or lyte
Ne to no creature made she chere
Further than it lyked to Arcyte (wyte
Therwas no lacke, wit hwhich he might her
She was so ferforth yruen him to plese
That al that lyked him, dyd her ease

There nas to her no maner letter sent
That touched loue, from any maner wight
That she ne shewed him or it was brent
So playne she was, and dyd her ful might
That she nyl hyde nothing from her knight
Leste he of any vntrouthe her vpbreyde
Without bode his herte she obeyde

And eke he made him false ouer her
That what that any man had to her sayde
Anon he wolde prayen her to swere
what was ỳ worde, or make him yuel apaide
Than wepe she out of her wytte haue braide
But al was but sleight and flaterye
Without loue he fayned ielousye

And al this toke she so debonairly
That al his wyl, her thought it for ful wyng
And euer the lenger she loued him tenderly
And dyd him honour as he were a kyng
Her herte was to him wedded with a ryng
For so ferforthe vpon trouthe is her entent
That where he gothe, her herte w him went

Whā she shal eate, on him is so her thought
That wel vneth of meate toke she kepe
And whan she was to her rest brought
On him she thought al way er̄ that she slepe
And whan he was absent, prively dothe she wepe
Thus lyueth fayre Anelyda the quene
For false Arcyte, that dyd her al this tene

This false Arcyte, of his newfangleneſſe
For she to him so lowly was and trewe
Toke lesse deynte for her stedfastnesse
And sawe another lady proude and newe
And right anon he clad him in her hewe
Wote I not whether in whyte, reed, or grene
And falsed fayre Anelyda the quene

But neuertheleſſe, great wonder was it none
Though he were false, for it is ỳ kynde of mā
Sythe Lamech was, that is so longe agone
To be in loue as false as euer he can
He was the first father that began
To louen two, and was in bigamye
And he founde termes first, but if men lye

This false Arcyte, somwhat muste he fayne
Whā he was false, to couerē his traytourye
Right as an horse, ỳ can both byte & playne
For he bare her in honde of trecherye
And swore he coude her doubleneſſe espye
And al was falsnesse that she to him ment
thus swore this there & forth his way he wēt

Alas, what herte might endure it
For routhe or wo, her sorowe for to tel
Or what man hath the conuyng or the wyt
Or what man might within ỳ chambre dwel
If I to him rehersen shal the bel
That suffereth fayre Anelida the quene
For false Arcyte, that dyd al this tene

She weepeth, waylyth, & swoundreth pitously
To grounde deed she falleth as a stone
Crampissheth her lymmes crokedly
She speketh as her wytte were al agone
Other colour than al shen hath she none
ne none other worde speketh she moche or lite
But mercy reuel herte myn Arcyte

And thus endureth, yll that she was so mate
That she ne hath foote, on which she may sta-
But forth lagarythig euer in this estate (tene
Of which Arcite hath neyther rothe ne rene
His hert was els where newe and grene
That on her wo, ne deineth him not to thinke
Him recketh neuer whether she flete or synke

This newe lady holdeth him so narowe
Up by the bridel, at the flaues ende
That euery worde he dred it as an arowe
Her daunger made him both bowe & bende
And as her liste, made him turne or wende
For she ne graunted him in her lyuyng
No grace, why that he hath to synge

But droue him forthe, vneth list her knowe
That he was seruaunt vnto her ladyshyp
But leste he were proude, she held him lowe
Thus serueth he, without meate or syp
She sente him nowe to lande, & nowe to shyp
And for she saue him daunger al his syl
Therfore she had him at her owne wyl

Ensample of this, ye thrifty women al
Take hede of Anneyda and false Arcyte
That for her syll him, her dere herte cal
And was so meke, therfore he loued her lyte
The kynde of mannes herte is to delyte
On thing that straunge is, also god me saue
For what they may not get, ỹ wold they haue

Nowe turne we to Anneyda ayen
That pyneth day by day in languishyng
But whan she sawe that her no gate no geyn
Upon a day ful sorowfully wepyng
She cast her for to make a complaynyng
And with her owne hande she gan it write
And sente it to her Thrban knight Arcyte.

¶ The complaynt of Anneyda to false Arcyte.

SO thryzled with the poynt of
remembraunce
The swerde of sorowe, whet
with false plesaunce
Myn herte bare of blysse, and
blacke of hewe
That turned is to quakyng al my daunce
My sewerte in a waped countenaunce
Seems it auayleth nought to bentrewe
For who so trewe is, it shall her rewe
That serueth loue, and dothe her obseruaunce
Alway to one, and chaungeth for none newe

I wote my selfe as wel as any wight
For I loued one, with al myn hert and might
More than my selfe, an hundred thousande sith
And called him my hertes lyfe, my knight
And was al his, as ferre as it was right
And whan ỹ he was glad, glad was I blithe
And his disease was my dethe as swythe
And he ayen, his trouthe hath me plight
For euermore his lady me to kythe

Nowe is he false alas, and causeles
And of my wo he is so routhles
That with a worde him lyst not ones darne
To bring ayen my sorowful herte in pers
For he is caught vp in an other lres
Right as him lyst he laugheth at my payne
And I ne can myn herte not restrayne
For to loue him yet al way trewerthes
And of al this I not to whom to playne

And shulde I playne, alas the harde stounde
Unto my foe, that haue myn herte a wounde
And yet desyreth that myn harme be more
Nowe certes further wol I neuer be founde
None other bote, my sores for to sounde
My destenny hath shaped so ful yore
I wot none other medicyne ne lore
I wot ben aye there I was ones bounde
That I haue sayd, be sayd for euermore

Alas, where is become your gentylnesse
Your worthynesse ful of plesaunce & humblesse
Your obseruaunce in so lowe maniere
Your awayting, and your besynesse
On me, that ye called your maystresse
Your soueraine lady in this worlde here
Alas, is there neyther worde ne chere
Ye vouchsafe vpon myn heuynesse
Alas your loue, I bye it al to dere

Nowe certes swete, though that ye
Thus causeles the cause be
Of my derelye auentyre
Your manly reason ought it to respyte
To slee your frende, and namely me
That neuer yet in no degre
Offended you, as wisly he
That al wote, of wo my soule quyte

But for I was so playne Arcyte

In al

In al my workes moche and lyte
And was to besy you to deryte
Myne honour saue, meke, kynde, and fre
Therfore ye put in me this wyte
Alas, ye retche not a myte
Though that the swerde of sorowe byte
My woful herte, throughe your cruelte

My swete foe, why do ye so for chaine
And thynke ye that furthered be your naine
To loue a newe, and ben untrewe aye
And put you in slaunder nowe and blame
And do to me aduersyte and graine
That loue you most, god thou wost alwaye
Yet turne ayen, and yet be playne soune daye
And than shal this yl nowe is mys ben gaine
And al forgeue, whyle I lyue maye

Lo herte myne, al this is for to sayne
As whether shal I praye or els playne
Which is the way to done you to be trewe
For eyther mote I haue you in my chayne
Or with the deth ye mote departe vs twayne
There be the none other meane wayes newe
For god so wysely on my soule rewe
As verely ye slayne me with the payne
That nowe ye se on kayned on mine hewe

For thus forforth haue I my deth sought
My selfe I murdre with my priuy aught
For sorowe and routh of your vnkyndenesse
I wepe, I wayle, I fast, al helpeth naught
I voyde joy that is to speke of aught
I voyde company, I flye gladnesse
Who may auaunt her better of heuynesse
Than I, as to this plite haue ye me brought
Without gylte, me nedeth no wytnesse

And should I pray, a weyuen womanhede
May rather deth, than do so foule a dede
And aske mercy and gyltelesse, what nede
And if I playne what lyke I lede
You reckeith not, that know I out of drede
And if I vnto you myne othes bede
For myne excuse, a straine shal be my mede
Your chere slaueth, but it wol not sede
Ful longe agon I might haue taken hede

For though I had you to morowe agayne
I myght as wel holde Aprill from rayne
As holde you to maken stedfast
Almyghty god, of trouthe the souerayne
Wher is the trouth of mā, who hath it slayne
She that hem loueth, shall hem fynde as fast
As in a tempest is a rotten mast
Is that a tame beest, that is aye fayne
To renne away, whan he is lest agast

Nowe mercy swete, if I myssay
Haue I aught sayd out of the way
I not, my wytte is al away
I fare as doth the songe of chaunteplure
For nowe I playne, and nowe I play
I am so mased that I dey
Arcyte hath borne away the key
Of al my worlde, & my good auenture

For in this worlde there nys no creature
Walkyng in more discomforture
Than I, ne more sorowe endure
For if I slepe a furlonge way or fwey
Than thynketh me that your fygure
Before me stante clad in asure
Eyte to profre a newe assure
For to ben trewe, and mercy me to prey

The long nyght, this wonder syght ydyte
That on the day for suche affray I dye
And of al this right naught twys ye retche
Ne neuermore myne eyen two ben dryc
And to your routh, & to your trouth I crye
But welaway, to ferre ben they to fetche
Thus holdeth me my destenye a werche
But me to rede out of this drede or gye
Ne may my wyt (so weake is it) not stretche

Than rede I thus, sythe I may do nomore
I yeue it vp for nowe and euer more
For I that neuer ete putten in balaunce
My sykernesse, ne lerne of loue the lore
But as the swan, I haue herde say ful yore
Ayeuste his deth wol syng in his penaunce
So synge I here the destenye and chaunce
Howe that Arcyte Anneliyda so sore
Hath thrilled with the poynt of remembraunce

Whan that Anneliyda this woful quene
Hath of her hande writen in this wyse
With face dred, her wyte pale and grene
She fel a swoune, and sythe she gan ryse
And vnto Mars auoweth facte syse
Within the temple, with a sorowful chere
That shapen was, as ye may playnly here.

Explicit.

¶ The assemble of ladyes

IN Septembre at the fallynge
of the lefe
The freshe season was al togi-
der goon
And of the corne was gathe-
red the shefe
In a gardyne aboute twayne after noone
Ther were ladies walkig, as was her wone
Foure in nombre, as to my mynde doth fal
And I the lythe, the symplest of hem al

Of gentylwomen fayre there were also
Dispozyng hem, euerychc after her gyse
In crosse aleys walkyng by two and two
And some alone, after her fantasyse
Thus occupyed we were in dyuerse wyse
And yet in trouthe we were not al alone
There were knightes & squires many one

Wherof I serued, one of hem asked me
I sayd ayen, as it fel in my thought
To walke aboute the mase in certaynte
As a woman that nothyng rought
He asked me ayen whom that I sought
And of my colour, why I was so pale
Forsothe (qd I) and therby lythe a tale

That must me were (qd he) & that anone
Tell on let se, and make no taryeng
Abyde (quod I) ye ben a hasty one
I let you were it is no lytel thyng
But for bycause ye haue a great longyng
In your desyre, this processe for to here
I shal you tel the playne of this matere

It happed thus, that in an after noone
My felawshyp and I by one assent
Whan al other besynesses were doone
To passe our tyme, into this mase we went
And toke our wayes, eche after our entent
Some wet inward, & went they had gon out
Some stode in the myd, & loked all about

And soth to say, some were ful ferre behynde
And right anon as ferforthe as the best
Other there were so mased in her mynde
Alwayes were good for hem both rest & wey
Thus went they forth, and had but lytel res
And some her courage dyd hem sore assayle
For bery wrathe, they dyd step ouer ꝑ rayle

And as they sought hem selfe to and fro
I gate my selfe a lytel auauntage
Al for wery ed, I might no further go
Though I had won right great for my biage
So came I forth in to a strayte passage
Which brought me to an herber faire & grene
Made with benches ful crafty and cleane

That as me thought, there myght no creature
Deuise a better, by bewe proporcionn
Sake it was closed wel I you ensure
With masonrye, of compace emyroun
Ful secretly with stayres goyng down
In myddes ꝑ place, & turning wheie certain
And vpon that a pore of Spargelayne

With margerettes growyng in ordynaūce
To shewe hem selfe, as folke went to & fro
That to beholde it was a great plesaunce
And how they were accompanyed with mo
Ne mombly sacrifice and soueresse also
The poure penkes were not disloged there
Ne god wote her place was euery where

The flore & bench was paued fayre & smoth
With stones square, of many dyuers hewe
So wel ioyned, that for to say the sothe
Al semed one, that none other knewe
And vndernethe the stremes newe and newe
As syluer bryght, lyngyng in such a wyse
That whence it came, ye coude it not deuyse

A lytel whyle was I al alone
Beholdyng wel this delectable place
My felawshyp were comyng euerychone
So muste we nedes abyde for a space
Remembryng of many dyuers cace
Of tyme passed, with syghes depe
I set me downe, and there I fel a slepe

And as I slept, me thought there came to me
A gentylwoman, merely of stature
Of great worshyp she semed for to be
Atyred wel, not hygh but by measure
Her countenaunce ful sade and demure
Her colours blewe, al that she had vpon
There came no mo but her selfe alone

Her

per go wone wel was rudy and red certainly
With stones after her owne deuyse
In her purfyl, her wo3de by and by
(vbi et loyaiment) as I coude deuyse
Than prayde I her many maner wyse
That of her name I might haue trewe vsaunce
She sayd she was called Perfitenaunce

And furtherm3e to speke was I bolde
Where she dwelled, I prayed her for to say
And she agayne ful curteisly me tolde
My dwellyng is, and hath be many a day
With a lady: what lady I you pray
Of great estate, thus warne I you (q3 she)
What cal ye her? Her name is Loyalte

In what office stande ye, o3 in what degre
(q3 I to her) that w_) I were right fayne
I am (quod she) vnwo3thy though I be
Of her chambre her vsher in certayne
This rodde I beare, as for a token playne
Lyke as ye knowe the rule in suche seruyce
Apertaynyng is to the same office.

She charged me by her commaundement
To warne you, and your felawes euerichone
That ye shulde come there as she is present
For a counsayle, whiche shall be nowe anone
Of seuen dayes be comen and gone
And furthermo3e, she bad that I sh_ ide say
Excuse there might be none no3 delay

Another thyng was not forget behynde
Whiche in no wyse I wolde but ye knewe
Remembre wel, and beare it in your mynde
Al your felawes and ye muste come in bi rewe
Euerylyche able, your maters for to shewe
With mo3e, whiche I pray you thinke vpon
Your wo3des on your selues euerychon

And be not abasshed in no maner wyse
As many ben, in suche an high presence
Make your requeste, as ye can best deuyse
And she gladly wol yeue you audyence
There is no greke, no3 no maner offence
Wherin ye feie that your herte is displeased
But with her help, right sone ye shal be eased

I am right glad (quod I) ye tel me this
But there is non of vs that knoweth y^ way
As of your way (q3 she) ye shall not mys
Ye shal haue to gyde you day by day
Of my felawes, I can not better say
Suche one as shal tel you the wo3e ful right
And Dylygence this gentyl woman hight

A woman of right famous gouernaunce
And wel cherished, I tel you in certayne
Her felaushyp shal do you great pleasaunce
Her porte is such, her maners trewe & plaine
She with glad chere wol do her best payne
To bring you there, now farwel I haue done
Abyde sayd I, ye may not go so sone,

Why so (quod she) and I haue ferre to go
To yeue warnyng in many dyuers place
To your felawes, and so to other mo
And wel ye wote I haue but lytel space
Nowe yet (q3 I) ye must tel me this cace
If we shal any men vnto vs cal
Not one (q3 she) may come amonges you al

Not one than sayd I, eigh benedicite
What haue I done, I pray you tel me that
Nowe by my lyfe, I trowe but wel (q3 she)
But euer I can byleue there is somwhat
And for to saye you trouthe mo3e can I not
In questyons I may nothyng be to large
I meddle no further than my charge

Than thus (quod I) do me to vnderstande
What place is there this lady is dwellyng
For sothe (q3 she) s one sought al this lande
Fayrer is none, though it were for a kyng
Deuysed wel, and that in euery thyng
The toures hye ful pleasaunt shal ye fynde
With phanes fresh, turnyng ab euery wynde

The chambres and parlers of a sorte
Vb bay windowes, goodly as may be thought
As for daunsyng, and other wyse disporte
The galeryes right wel y^wrought
That wel I wote, if ye were thyder brought
And take good hede therof in euery wyse
Ye wol it thinke a very paradyse

What hight y^ place (q3 I) now say me that
Pleasaunt regarde (q3 she) to tel you playne
Of very trouth (quod I) and wote ye what
It may right wel be called so certayne
But furthermo3e this wold I wit right fayn
What I shulde do as sone as I come there
And after whom I may best enquere

A gentyl woman, a porter of the yate
There shal ye fynde, her name is Coũtenaũce

Nowe it is tyme I parte you fro
For in good fayth I haue great busynesse
I wote right wel (quod I) that it is so
And I thanke you of your great gentylnesse
Your comforte hath yeuen me hardynesse
That nowe I shal be bolde withouten fayle
To do after your aduyce and good counsayle

Thus parted she, and I lefte al alone
With that I sawe (as I beheld aside)
A woman come a berye goodly one
And forth withal as I had her aspyde
Me thought anone it shoulde be the gyde
And of her name anone I dyd enquere
Ful womanly she yaue me this answere

I am (quod she) a symple creature
Sent from the courte, my name is Diligence
As sone as I might come I you ensure
I taryed not after I had lycence
And nowe that I am come to your presence
Loke what seruyce I can do or may
Commaunde me, I can no further say

I thanked her, and prayed her to come nere
Because I wolde se how she was arayde
Her gown was blew dressed in good manere
With her deuyse, her worde also that sayde
(Tant que ie puis) and I was wel apayde
And than wyst I withouten any more
It was full trewe that I had herde before

Though we toke nowe before a lytel space
It were ful good (quod she) as I coude gesse
Howe farre (qd I) haue we vnto the place
A dayes iourney (quod she) but lytel lesse
Wherfore I rede that we outwarde dresse
For I suppose our felawshyp is past
And for nothynge I wold not we were ylast

Than departed we at the springyng of ỹ day
And forth we wente softe and easy pace
Tyl at the last we were on our iourney
So far outwarde, that we might se the place
Nowe let vs rest (quod I) a lytel space
And say we as deuoutly as we can
Our mater sodes for saynt Julyan

Wolde wit my herte I assent with good wyll
Wych better shal we spede, wha we haue
Than taried we, and layd it euery dyl (done
And whan the day was past farre after none
We sawe a place, and thyder came we sone
Whiche rounde aboute was closed wh a wal
Semynge to me ful lyke an hospital

There fonde I one had brought al myn aray
(A gentyl woman of myne acquayntaunce)
I haue meruayle (quod I) what maner way
Ye had knowlege of al this ordenaunce
Yes yes (quod she) I herde perseueraunce
Howe she watned her felawes euerychone
And what aray ye shoulde haue vpon

Nowe for my loue (quod I) this I you praye
Sith ye haue take vpon you al the payne
That ye wolde helpe me on with myne arraye
For wyt ye well I wolde be gone right fayne
All this prayer neuerth not certayne
(Quod she) agayne, come of a hye you sone
And ye shall se anone it shal be done

But this I doute me greatly, wote ye what
That my felawes be passed by and gone
I warne you (quod she) that are they nat
For here they shall assemble euerychone
Notwithstandynge I counsayle you anone
Make you redy, and tary you no more
It is no harme thoughe ye be there before

So than I dressed me in myne araye
And asked her whether it were wel or no
It is ryght wel (quod she) vnto my pay
Ye nede nat care to what place euer ye go
And whyles that she and I debated so
Came Diligence and sawe me al in blewe
Syster (qd she) right wel broke ye your newe
Discrecion purueyour.
Than wente we forth and met at auenture
A yonge woman, an officer semynge
Wha is your name (quod I) good creature
Discrecyon (quod she) without lesynge
And where (quod I) is your most abydynge
I haue (quod she) this office of purchace
Chefe purueyour that longeth to this place
Acquayntaunce herbyger.
Fayre loue (quod I) in al your ordenaunce
What is her name that is the herbygere
Forsothe (qd she) her name is Acquayntaunce
A woman of right graceyous maniere

Than

The thus (qõ I) what straūgers haue ye here
But fewe (quod she) of high degree ne lowe
Ye be the first, as ferforth as I knowe

Countenaunce porter.

Thus with tales we came streight to ỳ yate
This yonge woman departed was and gone
Came Diligence and knocked full therat
Who is without (qõ Coũtenaunce) anone
Truely (quod I) fayre sister here is one
Which one (qõ she) & there withal she loughe
I Diligence, ye knowe me wel ynoughe

Than opened she the gate, and in we go
With wordes fayre she sayde ful gentyly
Ye are welcome ywis, are ye no moe
Nat one (qõ she) saue this woman and I
Now than (qõ she) I pray you hertely
Take my chambre fo, a whyle to rest
Tyl your felawes come, I holde it best

I thanked her, and forth we go euerychone
Tyl her chambre without wordes mo
Came Diligence and toke her leaue anone
Where euer ye lyst (quod I) nowe may ye go
And I thanke you right hertely also
Of your labour, for which god do you mede
I can no more, but Jesu be your spede

Than Countenaunce asked me anone
Your felawshyp, where be they (quod she)
For sothe (qõ I) they be comynge euerychone
But where they are I knowe no certaynte
Without I may hem at this windowe se
Here wyl I stande awaytyng euer amonge
For wel I wote they wyl not be longe

Thus as I stode musyng ful busyly
I thought to take good hede of her aray
Her gowne was blewe, thys wote I verely
Of good facyon, and furred wel with gray
Upon her sleue her worde this is no nay
Whiche sayd thus, as my penne can endite
(I moy que ie voy) wrỹtē with letters white

Than forth withal she came streyght to me
Your wordes (qõ she) fayn wold I ỳ I knew
For sothe (quod I) ye shal wel knowe and se
And for my worde I haue none, this is trew
It is ynough that my clothyng be blewe
As here before I had commaundement
And so to do, I am right wel content

Largesse stewarde.

But tel me this I pray you hertely
The stewarde how cal me, to know her name
She hight Largesse I say you surely
A fayre lady and of right noble fame
Whan ye her se ye wyl repute her the same
And vnder her ye be you welcome al
There is Beleyser marshal of the hal

Nowe al this whyle that ye here tary styl
Your own maters ye may wel haue in mynde
But tel me this, haue ye brought any byl
Ye ye (quod I) and els I were behynde
Where is there one tel me that I may fynde
To whõ ỳ I may shewe my maters playne
Surely (quod she) vnto the chamberlayne

Remembraunce chamberlayne.

The chamberlayne (quod I) say ye trewe
Ye verely (sayd she) by myne aduyse
Be nat aferde, vnto her lowlye sewe
It shal be done (quod I) as ye deuyse
But ye must knowe her name in any wyse
Trewly (qõ she) to shewe you in substaunce
Without fayning her name is Remẽbraũce

The secretarye she may not yet be forget
For she dothe right muche in euery thynge
Wherfore I rede, whan ye haue with her ymet
Your matere hole tel her without fayninge
Ye shal her fynde ful good and ful louynge
Tel me her name (quod I) of gentelnesse
By my good sothe (quod she) Juyseneſſe

That (quod I) for her is passyng good
For euery byl and scedule she must se
Now good (qõ I) come stãde ther as I stode
My felawes be comynge, ponder they be
Is it iape, or say ye sothe (quod she)
In iape, nay nay, I say you for certayne
Se how they com togither twayn & twayne

Ye say ful sothe (quod she) that is no nay
I se comyng a goodly company
They ben such folke (qõ I) dare I say
That fyll to loue, thynke it verely
And for my loue I pray you fayrhfully
At any tyme, whan they vpon me cal
That ye wol be good frende to hem al

Of my frenshyp (qõ she) they shal not myſſe
And for your sake to put there to my payne
God yelde it you (qõ I) but take you this
Nowe shal we know who is ỳ chamberlayne
That shal ye wel know by her worde certayne
What is her worde syster, I pray you say

(pass[illegible]

Thus [illegible] and I
Euen [illegible]
So me I [illegible] was goodly)
And bade [illegible]
Than came forth Countenaunce anone
Ful hertely, fayre sisters al (quod she)
Ye be right welcome into this countre

I counsayle you to take a lytel rest
In my chambre, if it be your plesaunce
Whan ye be there, me thynke it for the best
That I go in, and cal Perseueraunce
Bycause she is of your acquayntaunce
And she also wyl tel you euery thynge
Howe ye shal be ruled of your comynge

Myy felawes al and I, by one aduyse
Were wel agreed, to do lyke as she sayde
Thā we begā to dresse vs in our gyse (weyde
That folke shoulde saye we were nat disposed
And good wagers among vs there we layde
Which of vs was atyred most goodliest
And of vs al whiche shulde be praysed best

The porter came and brought Perseuerance
She welcomed vs in curteyse manere
Thinke ye not longe (qō she) of your attēdance
I wyl go speke vnto the herbigere
That she puruey for your lodging here
Than wyl I go vnto the chamberlayne
To speke for you, and come anone agayne

And whan she departed was and gone
We sawe folkes comyng without the wal
So grete people, that nombre coude we none
Ladyes they were, and gentelwomen al
Clothed in diuerse echone her wonde withal
But for to knowe her wonde or her deuise
They came so thicke, ỹ I ne might i no wise

With that anone came in Perseuerance
And where I stode, she came streight to me
Ye, ben (qō she) of myn olde acquayntaunce
You to enquere the holder woulde I be
What wonde they bere eche after her degre
I pray you tel it me in feuere wyse
And I shal kepe it close on warrantyse

We ben fyue ladyes (quod I) al in fere
And gentylwomen foure in company
When they began to open her matere
Than shal ye knowe her wonders by and by
But as for me I haue none heresy
And so I stode Countenaunce here before
Al myn aray is diuerse, what nedeth more

Nowe than (quod she) I wol go agayne
That ye may haue knowelege, what ye shall
In forth (qō I) if ye wolde take the payne (do
Ye dyd right moche for vs, ye dyd so
The earlier spede, the sonner may we go
Great rose alway there is in tarynge
And longe to sewe it is a wery thynge

Than parted she, and came agayne anone
Ye must (quod she) come to the chamberlayne
We be nowe redy (quod I) euerychone
To folowe you, whan euer ye lyst certayne
We haue none excuse, for to tel you playne
Beseching you we may be so excused
Our trewe meanyng, that it be not refused

Than went we forth after Perseuerance
To se the spices it was a wonder cace
There for to passe it was great combraunce
The people stode so thycke in euery place
Nowe stande ye styl (quod she) a lytel space
And for your ease somwhat I shal assay
If I can make you any better way

And forth she gothe, amonge hem euerychone
Making a way, that we might through passe
More at our ease, and whan she had so done
She beckende vs to come, where as she was
So after her we folowed more and las
She brought vs streight vnto ỹ chāberlaine
There lefte she vs, and than she went agayne

We salued her as reason woulde it so
Ful humble besechyng her great goodnesse
In our matters that we had for to do
That she woulde be good lady and maystresse
Ye be welcome (quod she) in sothfastnesse
And se what I can do, you for to please
I am redy, that may be to your ease

We folowed her vnto the chamber dore
Sisters (quod she) come ye in after me
But wete ye wel, there was a paued flore
The goodliest, that any wight might se
And furthermore aboute than loked we
On eche corner, and vpon euery wal
Whiche was made of Burel and Cristal

Wherin

Wherin was grauen of stories many one
First howe Phillis, of wemanly pyte
Wed pytously for loue of Demophone
Next after was the story of Tylde
Howe she slewe her selfe vnder a tree
Yet sawe I more, howe in a ryght pytous
For Antony was slayne Cleopatras (cause

That other syde was hawes the shene
Ful bautefully dyuersyfied in her bayne
There was also Dame Ida the quene
Upon Ireine howe sore she dyd complayne
All these stories were grauen there certayne
And many mo, than I tell can you here
It were to longe to tel you al in fere

And bycause the walles shone so bright
With fyne Vmple ston, were al ouer spraid
To ꝑ entent none shulde hurte her syght
And through it the stories myght be rad
Than further more I went, as I was lad
And there I sawe without any fayle
A chayre set, with ful ryche apparayle

And fyue stages it was set fro the grounde
Of Cassydony ful curyously wrought
With foure pomelles of golde, & very rounde
Set w̄ sapphires, as good as coude be thought
That wot ye what, if it wer through sought
As I suppose, fro this countre to Inde
Another suche it were right farre to fynde

For were ye wel, I was right nere that
So as I durst, beholdyng by and by
Howe there was a riche clothe of estate
Wrought with the noble ful straungely
Her worde theron, and thus it sayd truely
I endure to tel you in wordes fewe
With great letters, the better I hem knewe

Thus as we stode, a doze opened anone
A gentylwoman, semely of stature
Beryng a mace, came out her selfe alone
Methely me thought a goodly creature
She spake nothynge to lowde, I you ensure
Nor hastely, but with goodly wayinge
Make rome (quod she) my lady is comynge

With that anone I sawe Perseuerance
Howe she helde vp the taper in her hande
I sawe also right in goodly ordenaunce
This great lady within the taper stande
Comyng outwarde, I wol ye vnderstande
And after her a noble company
I coude not tell you the seuerall

Of their names I wolde not you enquere
Further than suche as we wolde fewe vnto
Haue a lady, whiche was the chauncellere
Attemperaunce sothely her name was so
For vs nedeth with her haue muche to do
In our maters, and alway more and more
And so forthe to tel you furthermore

Of this lady, her beaute to discryue
My connynge is to simple verely
For neuer yet the dayes of my lyue
No only sayde I haue sene none trewly
In her estate assured vtterly
There wanted nought, I dare wel assure
That longed to a goodly creature

And furthermore to speke of her araye
I shal tel you the maner of her gowne
Of clothe of golde, ful ryche it is no nay
The colour blewe of right goodly fasyons
In taberde wise, the sleues hangyng adown
And what purfyl there was, & in what wise
So as I can I shal it you deuyse

After a forte, the coller and the bende
Lyke as Armyne is made in purfelynge
With great perles ful fyne and orient
They were couched al after one worthynge
With diamondes in stede of powderyng
The sleues and purfel of assyse
They were made lyke in euery wyse

Aboute her necke a forte of fayre rubyes
In whyte floures of ryght fyne enamayle
Upon her heed set in the fayrest wyse
A cercle of great balays of entayle
That in ernest to speke without fayle
For yonge and olde, and euery maner age
It was a worlde to loken on her vysage

Thus comyng forth to sytte in her estate
In her presence we kneled down euerychone
Presentyng our billes, and wote ye what
Ful humbly she toke hem by one and one
When we had done, than came they al anone
And bad the same erle after her maniere
Enclyng at ones, and syttinge al in fere

And whā this was don, & she set in her place
The chamberlayne she bad vnto her cal

And

And she goodly com[illegible] pace
Of her [illegible] at al
Unto [illegible] op to[illegible] wal
Make large[illegible] do not tary
And take their bylles to the secretary

The chamberlayne dyd her commaũdement
And came agayne, as she was dyd to do
The secretary there beyng present
The bylles were delyuered her also
Not onely ours, but many other mo
Than the lady with good aduyse agayne
Anone with al, called her chamberlayne

We wol (qõ she) the first thyng that ye do
The secretary ye do make come anone
With her bylles, and thus we wyl also
In our presence she rede hem euerychon
That we maye take good aduyse theron
Of the ladyes that ben of our counsayle
Loke this be done, withouten any fayle

Whan the chamberlayne wyst of her entent
Anone she dyd the secretarye cal
Let your bylles (qõ she) be here present
My lady it wyl: Madame (qõ she) I shal
And in presence she wyl ye hem cal
With good wyl I am redy (quod she)
At her plea sure, whan she cõmaundeth me

And vpon that was made an ordynaunce
They that came first her bylles shulde be red
Ful gentelly than sayd Perseueraunce
Reason it wyl they were sonest spedde
Anone withal, vpon a tapet spredde
The secretary layde hem downe echone
Our bylles first she redde one by one

The first lady beatyng in her deuyse
Sans que iamays, thus wrote she on her byl
Complayning sore, and in ful pytous wyse
Of promesse made, with faythful herte wyl
And so broken ayenst al maner skyl
Without deserte, alwayes on her partye
In this mater, desiryng a remedye

Her next folowing, her word was i this wise
(Ung sanz chaũgier) & thus she dyd cõplayne
Though she had be guerdoned for her seruice
Yet nothyng lyke as she hat toke the payne
Wherfore she coude in no wyse her restrayne
But in this case sewe vnto her presence
Of reason wolde to haue recompence

So furthermore, to speke of other swayne
One of hem wrote after her fantasy
(Vngnes puis leuer) & for to tel yon playne
Her complaynt was ful pytous verely
For as she sayd, there was great reason why
As I can remembre this matere
I shal you tel the proceſſe al in fere

Her byl was made compla[illegible]age in her gyse
That of her ioye, her comfo[illegible] and gladnesse
Was no surete, for in no maner wyse
She sayd therin no poynte of stablenesse
Sowe yl nowe wele, out of al sykernesse
Ful humbly desyring of her high grace
Soone to shewe her remedy in this case

Her felawe made her byl, and thus she sayd
In playning wise ther[illegible]s she loued best
Whether she were wrothe or wele apayde
She might not se whan she wolde fayne rest
And wrothe she was in very ernest
To tel her worde, as forth as I wote
(Entierement vostre) right thus she wrote

And vpon that she made a great requeſt
With hert and wyl, al that might be done
As vnto her that might redresse it best
For in her mynde there might she fynd it sone
The remedy of that whiche was her boone
Rehersyng[illegible] she had sayde before
Beseching[illegible] it might be so no more

And in lyke wyse as they had done before
The gentylwomen of our company
Put her bylles, and for to tel you more
One of hem wrote (cest sanz dire) verely
And her matere hole to specify
Within her byl she put it in writynge
And what it sayd, ye shal haue knowynge

It sayd god wote, and that ful pytously
Lyke as she was disposed in her herte
No misfortune that she toke greuously
Al one to her was the ioy and smerte
Somtyme no thanke for al her good deserte
Other comforte she wanted none coueyng
And so ded, it greued her nothyng

Desyring her, and lowly beseechinge
That she wolde for seke a better way
As she that had ben her dayes lyuyng
Stedfast and true we, and wyl be alway
Of her felawe, somwhat I shal you say

Whose

whose byl was red nexte forthe withal
And what it ment, reherſen you I ſhal

(En bien eſt) she wrote in her deuyſe
And thus she ſayd without en fayle
Her trouthe might be take in no wyſe
Like as she thought, wherfor she had merualle
For trouth cõtyme was wont to take auayle
In euery matere, but al that is ago
The more pyte that it is ſuffred ſo

Moch more there was, wherof she ſhulde cõ-
But she thought it to great encõbraũce (playn
So muche to write, & therfore in certayn
In god and her she put al her affyaunce
Is in her worde is made a remembraunce
Beſechyng her, that she wolde in this cace
Shewe vnto her the fauour of her grace

The thirde she wrote reherſyng her greuaũce
Ye, wote ye what, a pytous thing to here
For as me thought she felt great diſpleſaũce
One myght ryght wel perceyue it by her chere
And no wonder, it sate her paſſyng nere
Yet lothe she was to put it in wrytinge
But nede wol haue courſe in euery thinge

(Soyes enſure) this was her worde certayn
And thus she wrote in a lytel ſpace
There she loued, her labor was in vayne
For he was ſet al in another place
Ful humbly deſyryng in that cace
Some good comforte her ſorowe to appeſe
That she might lyue more at hertes eaſe

The fourth ſurely me thought she liked wele
Is in her porte, and in her behauynge
And (bien moueſte) as ferre as I conde fele
That was her worde tyl her wel belong yng
Wherfore to her she prayed aboue al thyng
Ful hertely to say you in ſubſtaunce
That she wold ſende her good continuaũce

Ye haue reherſed me theſe byllys al
But nowe let se ſomwhat of your entente
It may ſo hap, parauenture ye ſhal
Nowe I pray you whyle I am here preſent
Ye ſhal haue knowlege parde what I ment
But thus I ſay, in trouth I make no fable
The cace it ſelfe is inly lamentable

And wel I wote ye wol thynke the ſame
Lyke as I ſay, whan ye haue herde my byl
Now good ſer an, I hate you by ſaint Jame
Abyde a while, it is not yet my wyl
Yet muſt ye wete by reaſon and by ſkyl
Sith ye haue knowlege of ỳ was don before
And thus it is ſayd without wordes more

Nothyng ſo leſe as deth to come to me
For fynal ende of my ſorowes and payne
Of what ſhulde I more deſyre as ſeme ye
And ye knewe al afore it for certayne
I wote ye wolde, and for to tel you playne
Without her helpe that hath al thinge in cure
I can nat thinke that it may longe endure

As for my trouth it hathe be proued wele
To ſay the ſothe, I can ſay no more
Of ful longe tyme and ſuffred euery dele
In patience, and kepe it al in lore
Of her goodneſſe, beſechyng her therfore
That I might haue my thanke in ſuche wiſe
As my deſerte ſerueth of iuſtiſe

Whan theſe billes were rad euerychone
The ladyes toke a good aduyſement
And hem to anſwere by one and one
She thought it was to muche in her entent
Wherfore she yaue hem commaundement
In her preſence to come bothe one and al
To yeue hem her anſwere in general

What dyd she than ſuppoſe ye berely?
She ſpake her ſelfe, and ſayd in this manere
We haue wel ſene your byllys by and by
And ſome of hem pytous for to here
We wol therfore ye knowe al this in fere
Within ſhorte tyme, our court of parlyment
Here ſhal be holde in our palays preſent

And in al this, wherin you fynde you greued
There ſhal ye fynde an open remedy
In ſuche wyſe as ye ſhal be releued
Of al that ye reherſe here throughly
As for the date ye ſhal knowe berely
That ye may haue a ſpace in your comyng
For Diligence ſhal it tel you by writyng

We thanked her in our moſt humble wyſe
Our feiauſhyp, ſeing we by our aſſente
Submityng vs lowly tyl her ſeruyſe
For as we thought, we had our trauayle ſpyld
In ſuche wiſe as we helde vs content
Than eche of vs toke other by the ſleue
And forth withal, as we ſhulde take our leue

At sodaynly the water dyenge anone
In my vysage, and thus at mydnyght I woke
Where am I now thought I, al this is gone
I mased, and up I gan to loke
And forthwith anon I went and made this boke
Thus symply rehersyng the substaunce
Because it shulde not be out of remembraunce

Nowe herely your dreame is passyng good
And worthy to be had in remembraunce
For though I stand here as longe as I stode
It shulde to me be none encombraunce
I toke therin so myy great plesaunce
But tel me nowe what ye the boke do cal
For I muste wete: With right good wyl ye (shal

As for this boke, to say you very right
Of the name to tel you in certaynte.
Assemble de dames, thus it highe
Howe thinke ye, that name is good parde
Nowe go farewel, for they cal after me
My sclawes al, and I must after sone
Rede wel my dreme, for nowe my tale is done

¶ Finis.

The conclusyons of the Astrolabye.

LYtel Lowys my sonne, I perceyue well by certayne tokenes thyne abylyte to lerne sciences, touchynge nombres and proporcions: and also wel consydre I thy bysye prayer in especyal to lerne the secretyse of the Astrolabye. Than for as muche as a philosopher sayth, he wyseth hym in hys frende, that condyscendeth to the ryghtful prayers of hys frende: therfore I have yeuen thee a sufficyent Astrolabye for oure orizonte, compowned after the latytude of Oxenforde: Upon the whiche by medyacyon of this lytell treatyse, I purpose to trache thee a certeyne nombre of conclusyons, pertaynynge to the same instrument. I saye a certayne of conclusions for thre causes, the first cause is this. Truste wel that alle the conclusyons that have be founden, or ben possiblye myght be founde in so noble an instrument as is the Astrolabye, ben unknowen perfytely to anye mortal man in this regyon, as I suppose. Another cause is this, ꝑ sothely in any partes of the Astrolaby that I have yknow, there ben some conclusions, that will not in al thinges performe her behestes: and some of hem be to harde to thy tender age of ten yere to conceyue. This treatyse devyded in fyue partes will I shewe the wonder lyght rules & naked wordes in englyshe, for latyn canst thou nat yet but smale, my litel sonne. But nevertheles sufficeth to the these treue conclusyons in englyshe, as wel as suffyseth to this noble clerkes grekes these same conclusions in greke, & to ꝑ Arabiens in arabike, And to Jewes in hebrewe, & to ꝑ latin folke in latyn: whiche latyn folke had hem first out of other dyuers languages, & wrote hem in her owne tonge, that is to sayne in latyne.

And god wote that in al these languages and in manye mo, have these conclusyons ben sufficyentlye lerned and taught, and yet by dyuers rules, right as dyuers pathes leden dyuers folke the ryght waye to Rome.

Nowe wol I praye mekely every person discrete, that rede or heerth this lytel treatyse, to have my rude entendyng excused, and my superfluite of wordes, for two causes. The first cause is, for that curyous endytyng and harde sentences is ful heuy at ones, for such a childe to lerne. And the secõde cause is this, that

that sothly me semeth better to writen vnto a childe twyse a good sentence, than he forgete it ones. And Lowys if it so be that I shew the in myn Englisshe, as trewe conclusyons, touching this matter, and not onely as trewe, but as many and subtyl conclusyons as bene shewed in latyn in any comune tretise of the Astrolabye, coueyte me the more thanke, and praye god saue the kynge, that is lorde of this langage, and al that him laythe beareth, and obeyeth euerich in his degre, the more and the lasse. But consydre the well, that I ne clayme not to haue founden this werke of my labour or of myne engyn, I nam but a leude compylatour of the laboure of olde Astrologiens, and haue it translated in myn englysshe onely for thy doctryne: and therwith thys swerd shal I frete euery.

¶ The first party.

The first partye of thys treatise shal reherse the figures, and membres of thyn astrolaby, bicause that thou shalte haue the greater knowynge of thyne owne instrument.

¶ The seconde partye.

The seconde party shal teche the to werken the very practyke of the forsayd conclusions as ferforthe and al so narowe as may be shewed in so smale an instrumente portatyfe, as boute. For well wote euery astrologyen, that smallest fractions ne wol not be shewed in so small an instrumente, as in subtyll tables calculed for a cause.

¶ The thirde partye.

The third partye shal contayne diuers tables of longitudes and latytudes of sterres, fyxe in the Astrolabye. And tables of the declynacions of the sonne, and tables of the longitude of cyties and townes. And tables as well for the gouernacion of the clocke, as for to fynde the altytude meridyan, and many an other notable conclusyon after the kalenders of the reuerent clerkes frere John Som, and frere N. Lenne.

¶ The fourth partye.

The fourth partye shal be a theorike to declare the meaning of the celestyal bodyes, with the causes, the which the fourth partie in special shal shewe in a table of the very meuinge of the moone from one to one euery daye and euery sygne, after thyn almanake. Upon the whiche table there folowyth a canon, sufficient to teache as wel in maner of worckynge in the same conclusions, as to knowe in our orizonte, with whiche degre of zodiac the moone aryseth in any latytude, and the arysynge in any planette after hys latytude fro the ecclyptyke lyne.

¶ The fyfte partye.

The fyfthe partie shal ben an introductorye after the statutes of our doctours, on whyche thou mayste lerne a great parte of the generall rules of theorike in astrologie. In whiche fyfthe partie thou shalt fynde tables of equacions of houses, after the latytude of Oxenforde, and tables of dignitees of planettes, & other noteful thynges, if god vouchsafe & hys mother the mayden, more than I behete.

¶ The rynge.

Thy Astrolabye hath a rynge to putten on thy thombe on thy right honde, in takynge of the heyght of thynges. And take kepe, from henceforwarde I wol clepe the heyght of eny thing, that is take by the rule, the altytude withouten mo wordes.

¶ The turet.

This rynge renneth in a maner of a turet, fastened to the moder of thyn Astrolabye, in a roume a space that it disturbeleth not the instrument to hangen after his right centure.

The moder of thyn Astrolabye is thickest by the brinkes, that is the vtmoste ryng with the degrees: and all the myddle wythin the rynge shal be thynner, to receyue the plates for diuers clymates, and also for the rethe, that is shape in maner of a net, or elles after the webbe of a loppe.

¶ The moder.

The moder of thyn Astrolabye is the thyckest plate perced with a large hole, that receyueth in her wombe thinne plates compowned of diuers clymates, & thy rete shapen in maner of a net or of a webbe of a loppe.

¶ Of the foure lynes.

This moder is deuyded on the backhalfe with a lyne, that cometh dyscendynge fro the ryng down to the nethereste bordure, the whyche lyne, fro the forsayd ryng vnto the centre of the large hole amidde, is cleped south lyne, or elles the lyne meridional: And the remenaunt of this lyne down to the bordure is cleped the northe lyne, or al the lyne of the midnight.

¶ Of .iiii. lynes est, west, northe, & south.

Ouerthwarte this forsayd long lyne, there crosseth him another lyne of the same lengthe, fro est to west, of the whiche lyne, from a lytell crosse in the bordure vnto the centure of the

large hoole, is cleped ꝑ eest lyne, or els ꝑ lyne oriental: and the remenaunte of the lyne, fro the forsayd oriental vnto the bordure, is ycleped the west lyne, or the lyne occidentall.

Nowe haste thou here the foure quarters of thyne Astrolabye, deuided after the four principal plages or quarters of the firmament.

¶ Whiche is the right syde, and whiche is the lyfte.

The eest syde of the Astrolabye is cleped the ryght syde, and the west syde is ycleped the lyfte syde. Forget not this lytell lowys. Put the ryngе of thyne Astrolabye vpon the thombe of thy ryghte hande, & than wol hys ryght syde be towarde thy lyft syde, and his lyfte syde wol be towarde thy ryghte syde. Take thys rule generall as well on the backe as on the wombe syde. Upon the ende of this eest line (as I first sayd) is ymarked a lytel crosse, where as euermore generallye is considred the entryng of the eest degre, in the which the sonne aryseth.

¶ The degrees fro the eest lyne to the Southe.

Fro the lytel crosse vp to the ende of the merydyonal lyne vnder the ryngе thaste thou fynde ꝑ bordure, deuyded with .lxxx. degrees, & by that same proporcion is euerye quarter of thyne Astrolabye denyded, ouer ꝑ which degrees there dennombres of angrim, that deuyden thylke same degrees fro .b. to .b. as sheweth by longe strykes betwene: of the which by lōg strikes ꝑ space bitwen cōteineth a myle way, & euery degree of thilke bordure conteyneth four mynutes, that is to say, four mynutes of an houre.

¶ Of the twelue sygnes, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, and the other.

Vnder the compas of thylke degrees ben written the names of the twelue signes, as Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, & Pisces. And the nōbres of ꝑ degrees of the sygnes ben written in augrim aboue, and with longe dryssions from syne to syne, deuideth from the time that the signe entreth vnto the laste ende. But vnderstande well, that these degrees of sygnes bene euerych of hem confydred of .lx. mynutes, and euery mynute of .lx. secondes, and so forth into smale fractions infinite, as saith Alcabucius. And therfore knowe wel that a degre of the bordure cōteyneth .iiii. mynutes, and a degre of a signe containeth .lx. mynutes, and hanc this in mynde.

¶ The cercle of the dayes.

Next this folowеth the cercle of the dayes, ꝑ ben fygured in maner of the degrees, that cōtenen in nombre .CCClxv. deuyded also with longe strikes from .b. to .b. and the nombres of augrim writte vnder the cercle.

¶ The cercle of the .xii. monthes

Next the cercle of dayes folowеth ꝑ cercle of the .xii. names of the monthes, that is to say, Januarius, Februarius, Marcius, Aprill, Maius, Junius, Julius, Auguste, September, October, Nouēber, Decēber. The names of these monthes taken her names, some for properties and some by statutes of Emperours, and some by other lordes of Rome. Eke of these monthes, as lyked to Julius Cesar and Cesar Augustus, some were ycompowned of dyuers nombres of dayes, as July & August. Than hath Januarius .xxxi. dayes, Februarius .xxviii. Marcius .xxxi. Aprill .xxx. May .xxxi. Junius .xxx. August .xxxi. September .xxx. October .xxxi. Nouember .xxx. December .xxxi. Natheless all thoughe that Julius Cesar tooke two dayes oute of Feuerye and put hem in hys monthe of July, and Augustus Cesar cleped the moneth of August after his name, & ordayned it of .xxxi. dayes, yet trust well that the sonne dwelleth therefore neuer the more ne the lasse in one signe than in another.

¶ The names of the holy dayes.

Than folowеth the names of ꝑ holy dayes in the kalender, and next hem the letters, A, B C, on which they fallen.

¶ The scale of the Astrolabye.

Next the forsayd cercle of the A, B, C, vnder the crosse lyne is marked the scale, in maner of two squiers, or els in maner of ledders that streeth by bis .xxii. poynes, and hys dyuysions of full manye a subtell conclusyon of this forsayd scale: for the crosse lyne vnto the bery angle, is cleped Umbra recta, or els umbra extensa, & the neyther party umbra versa.

¶ The rule.

Than

Than haste thou a brode rule that hath on euery ende a squate plate, parted ib certayne poles, some more & some lesse, to ceteyuen the strames of the sonne by daye, and eke by meyacio of thyn eye, to know the altytud of the sterres by nyght.

¶ The pyn which is ymagyned to be pole artyke and the horse.

Than is there a large pyn in maner of an epitre, that goth thorowe the hole that halte the tables of the clymathes in the ceeth, in the wombe of the moder, thorowe whych pynne there goth a lytell wedge, the which is cleped the horse, that straineth all these partes togither. This forelayd greate pynne in maner of an epitre, is ymagened to be the pole artyke in thyne Astrolabye.

¶ For lynes on the wombe syde.

The wombe syde of thyn Astrolaby is also deuyded with a longe crosse in four quarters from Eest to West, from Southe to Northe, from right syde to lyfte syde, as is the backside

¶ The degrees of the wombe syde.

The border of the which wombe syde is deuyded fro the poynte of the Eest lyne vnto the poynte of the southe lyne vnder the cynge in lxxx. degrees, and by the same proporcion is euery quarter deuyded, as is the backsyde, þ amounteth .CCC.lx. degrees. And vnderstande well that the degrees of this border be answerynge and consentynge to the degrees of equinoctial that is deuyded in the same numbre, as euery other cercle is in the hye heuen. This border is deuyded also wyth xxiii. letters, and a smale crosse aboue the southe lyne, that sheweth the .xxiiii. houres equales of the clocke. And I haue sayde .b. of these degrees maken a myle way, and .iii. myle way maken an houre, and euery degre of this border conteyneth .iiii. mynutes, and euery mynute .xl. secondes. Nowe haue I tolde the twyfe and for the more declaracion.

¶ Of the principall cercles.

The plate vnder the reete is dyscryued with thre cercles, of whiche the lest is cleped the cercle of Cancer, bycause þ the herd of Cancer turneth euermore cõcentrike vpon the same cercle. In this halfe of Cancer is the grettest declynacion northward of the sonne, and therfore is he ycleped Solsticiũ of sõmer, which declinacion after þ Ptholome, is .xxiii. degrees and .l. mynutes, as well in Cancer as in Capricorne. Thys sygne of Cancer is cleped the tropike of sũmer of tropos, that is to sayne ayenwarde. The myddel cercle in wydnes of this .iii. is cleped the cercle equinoctial, vpon whiche turneth euer more the heedes of Aries and Libra. And vnderstande well, that euermore this cercle equinoctial turneth iustly fro very Eest to very west, as I haue shewed in the sphere solid. This same cercle is cleped also the wayer of the day. For whan the sonne is in the hedde of Aries and Libra, than ben dayes and nyghtes lyke of lengthe in all the worlde, & therfore ben these two sygnes called equinoctis. And all that moueth within these heedes of Aries and Libra, is ycalled northwarde, and al that meueth without these heedes, his meuyng is cleped southwarde, as for the equinoctiall, take kepe of the latytudes Northe & Southe, and forget it not: By this cercle equinoctiall bene conslydred the .xxiiii. houres of the clocke. For euermore þ arysyng of .xv. degrees of the equinoctiall maketh an houre equale of the clocke. This equinoctial is cleped the mydway of the first meuinge, or eis of the sonne. And note that the firste meuyng is cleped meuynge of the firste mouable of the eight sphere, which meuyng is fro Eest to West, & agayne in to Eest. Also it is cleped gyrdel of the first meuyng. For it departeth þ first meuable, that is to saine, þ sphere in two lyke parties euen distant fro the poles of this worlde. The wydest of these thre cercles principal is cleped the cercle of Capricorne, & turneth euermore concentrike vpon the same cercle. In the heed of this forlayd Capricorne is the greatest declynacyon sothewarde of the sonne. And therfore it is cleped Solsticium of wynter. This signe of Capricorne is also cleped the tropike of wynter. For thã begynneth the sonne to come agayne to vs warde.

¶ Of the almicanteres, the signet, and what is thine office.

Vpon this forlayde plate ben compassed certayne cercles, that hyghten almicanteras: of which some of hem semen parfite cercles, and some semen imparfyte. The centure that stondeth a mydde st the narowest cercle is cleped the signet. And the nethereste cercle, that deuydeth þ two emisperies that is the partie of the heuen aboue þ erthe, and the partie bynethe. These almycanteras

ben compowned by two and two, all be it so that ou̇ dyuers astrolabies some almycanteras ben deuyded by one, & some by two, and some by thre, after the quantyte of the Astrolabye. Thys forsayde signet is ymagyned to be the very poynt ouer the crown of thy heed, and also this signet is the very pole of the orizonte in euery region.

¶ What ben thyne azimutes.

Frō this signet (as it semeth) there comen croked strykes, lyke to the clawes of a loppe, or els lyke to the werbe of a womans calle, in keruyng ouerthwarte the almycanteras, and these same strykes or dyuysions ben cleped Azimutes, and they deuyden the orizontes on thyne Astrolabye in .xxiiii. dyuysyons. And these azimutes serue to know the costes of ꝑ fyrmament, and to other cōclusyons, as forto know the signet of the sonne & of euery sterre.

¶ Of the .xii. houres of the planettes.

Nexte these azymutes, vnder the cercle of Cancer, bene the .xii. dyuysyons embo:ne, moche lyke to the shap of the azymutes that shewē the spaces of houres of planettes.

¶ Thy reete or els thy zodiake.

Thy reete of thyn Astrolabye which is thy zodiake shapen in maner of a net or of a loppe webbe, after the olde discrypcion, which thou maist turne vp & down as thy seife lyketh, cōteineth certayne nombre of sterres fyxe, with her longitudes & latitudes determinate, if so be that the maker haue not erred. The names of the sterres ben writen in the mergyn of thy reete there they syt, of the whiche sterres the smale poynt is cleped ꝑ centure. And vnderstonde, ꝑ al the sterres syttynge wythin the zodiake of thyn astrolabye, ben cleped sterres of ꝑ nozth, for they aryse by the nozthe eest lyne, and all the remenaunt fyres out of the zodiake, bene ycleped sterres of the southe, but I saye not that they aryse al by the south eest lyne, witnesse of Aldeberan and also Algomysa. Generally vnderstonde this rule, that thilke sterres that ben cleped sterres of the nozthe, aryse rather than the degree of her longytude, and all the sterres of the southe, aryse after the degree of her longytude, that is to sayne, sterres in thyne astrolabye. The measure of longytude of sterres ytaken in the lyne eclipsyke of heuen, vnder the whyche lyne whan that the sonne and the moone ben lyne righte, eis in the superficie of thys lyne, than is the eclyps of the sonne or of the moone, as I shal declare & eke the cause why: but sothly ꝑ eclipsyke lyne of thy zodiake is the vtterste bo:dure of the zodiake ther thy degrees ben marked. The zodyake of thy astrolabye is shapen as a compace, whyche that conteyneth a large brede, as after the quantyte of thy astrolabye, in ensample that the zodyake of heuen is ymagyned to be a superficies, conteynynge the latytude of .12. signes, where as all the remenaunt of cercles in heauen ben ymagyned very lynes withouten any latytude amyddes the celestyall zodyake is imagyned a lyne, whych that is cleped the eclipsyke lyne, vnder ꝑ whych lyne is euermoze the wave of ꝑ sun. Thus bē there .6. degrees of ꝑ zodiake of that one syde of the lyne, and .6. degrees on that other. The zodiake is deuyded in .12. principal deuysyons, that departen the .12. signes, and for ꝑ straytnesse of thyn astrolabye, than is euery smale deuysyon in a signe iparted by two degrees and two, I meane degrees conteynynge .60. mynutes, and this forsayde ouerynste zodiake is cleped the cercle of the signes, or the cercle of beestes. For zodiake in language of greke sowneth beestes in latē tonge, and in the zodiak ben the .12. signes that haue names of beestes, bycause whan the sonne entreth in any of the signes, he taketh the propertie of suche beestes, or els for that the sterres ꝑ ben there bē fyxed ben disposed in signe of beestes or shape lyke beestes, or els whan the planettes ben vnder the signes they transmue vs by her influences, operacions, and effectes, lyke to operacions of beestes. And vnderstande also, that whan an hoote planet entreth in to an hote signe, thā entreth his hete, and if a planet be colde, than amenuseth his coldenesse, bycause of the hotte signe. And by this conclusyon mayste thou taken ensample in all signes, be they moyste or dryе, mouable or fyxe, reckenynge the quantyte of the planettes as I firste sayde. And euerych of these .12. signes hath respecte to a certaine parcel of the body of a man, and hath it in gouernaūce: as Aries hath thyn heed, & Taurus thy necke and thy throte, Gemini thyne arme holes and thyn armes, and so forthe, as shall be shewed more plainly in the fifth partie of this treetyse. The zodiake the whiche is partie of the eight sphere, ouerkeruеth the equinoctial, and he ouerkeruеth hym ageyne in euen parties, and

that one halfe declyneth southward, and that other northwarde, as playnlye declareth the straytse of the sphere.

¶ The label.

Than hast thou a label that is shapen lyke a rule, saue that it is streight and hath no plates on eyther ende, but with the smale poynte of the forsayd label shalt thou calcule the equacions in the bordure of thyn astrolabye as by thyne almury.

¶ The almury, the dentycle of Capricorne, or els the calculere.

Thyne almury is cleped the dentycle of Capricorne, or els þ calculere, thys same almury set fyxe in the heed of Capricorne, it serueth of many a necessary conclusion in equacion of thynges, as shal be shewed.

¶ Here begynneth the conclusions of thyne Astrolabye to fynde the degre in the whiche the sonne is day by day, after his course about.

REcken and know which is the daye of the moneth, & lay thy rule vpon the same daye, and than wolt the verye poynte of thy rule verrily sytten on þ bordure vpõ the degree of þ sonne. Exlampie as thus. The yere of oure Lorde 1391 þ 12 day of March at mydday, I wold know þ degre of þ son, I sought in þ tabbalt of myne Astrolabye, & founde the cercle of the dayes the which I knew by the names of the monthes wrytten vnder the same cercle: tho layd I my rule ouer the forsayd day, & foũde the poynte of my rule in the bordet vpon the first degree of Aries, a lytell within þ degree: and thus knewe I this conclusion. Another day I wolde knowe the degree of my sonne, and this was at myddaye in the 13 day of December, I founde the daye of the monethe in maner as I sayde: tho layde I my rule vpon the forsayd 13 daye, and founde the poynte of my rule vpon the first degree of Capricorne, a litel within þ degre, and than had I of this conclusyon the very experience.

¶ To knowe the altitude of the sonne eyther of celestyal bodyes.

PVt the ryng of thyne Astrolabye vpon thyeyghte thombe, and tourne thy lyfte syde agayne the lyghte of the sonne, and remeue thy rule vp and downe tyll the streame of the same shyne thorowe both holes of the rule: Loke than how many degrees this rule is areysed fro the lytell Crosse vpon the eest lyne, and take there the altytude of thy sonne: and in this same wyse mayste thou knowe by nyght the altytude of þ moone, or of þ bryght sterres. This chapiter is so generall euer in one that there nedeth no more declaracyõ, but forget it not

¶ To knowe the degree of the sonne and of thy zodiake, by the dayes in the backsyde of thyne astrolaby.

THan if thou wylte wete the reckenynge to knowe whiche is the daye in thy calender of the moneth that thou arte in, laye thyne Astrolabye, that is to saye the alydada, vpon the daye in the calender of thyne Astrolabye, and he shall shewe the thy degree of the sonne.

¶ To knowe euery tyme of the day by lyghte of the sonne, and euery tyme of the nyght by the sterres fyxe, and eke to know bynight or by day the degree of þ signe þ ascendeth on the eest orizont, whiche is cleped comenly ascendent.

TAke the altytude of the sonne whan the lyst, as I haue sayd, and set the degree of the sonne (in caste that it be before þ middle of the daye) amonge thyne almycanteras on the eest syde of thyne astrolabye: and if it be after the middle of the day, set the degre of the sonne vpon the weste syde. Take thys maner of settynge for a generall rule ones for euer. And whan thou haste ysette the degree of the sonne vpon as many almycanteras of heyght as was the sonne, taken by thy rule, laye ouer thy label vpon the degree of the sonne, and thã wol the poynte of the labell sytten in the bordure vpon the verye tyde of the daye: Exlampie of thys. The yeare of oure Lorde 1391 the 12 daye of Marche, I wolde knowe the tyde of the day, I take the altytude of my sonne, and founde that it was 15 degrees, and 30 mynutes of heyght of þ bordure in the backsyde, tho turned I myn astrolaby, & bicause it was before myddaye I turned my reete, and set the

degre of ☉ sonne, that is to say, the first degre of Aries in the right syde in myne astrolabye, vpon the 25 degree & 30 mynutes of heyght, amonge my almycanteras: Tho layde I my label vpon the degree of my sonne, and founde the poynte of my label in the bordure on the capitale letter, that is cleped an X. Tho reckened I all the capitale letters fro the lyne of mydnyghte vnto the forsayd letter X, and founde it was 9 of the clocke of the day. Tho loked I ouer my first orizont and found there the 12 degre of Geminius ascendyng, whiche that I tooke for myne ascendent, and in thys wyse hadde I the experyence for euermore in whiche manere I shulde knowe the tyde of the daye, and eke myne ascendent. Tho wolde I wete that same nyght folowyng the houre of the nyght, and wrought in this wyse: among an heape of sterres it lyked me to take the altytude of ♈ fayre whyte sterre that is cleaped the Alhabor, and founde her syttynge on the weste syde of the lyne of myd day 18 degrees of heyght, taken by my rule on the backsyde. Tho sette I the centure of this alhabor vpon 18 degrees amonge my almycanteras vppon the weste syde, bycause ♈ he was founde vpon the weste syde: Tho layde I my label ouer ♈ degree of the sonne, that was discreded vnder the weste orizonte, and reckened al the letters capitalles fro the lyne of myddaye vnto the poynt of my label in the bordure, and founde that it was after noone, passed 7 of the clocke the space of 11 degrees. Tho loked I downe vpon my first orizonte, and founde there 20 degrees of Libra ascendynge, whom I toke for myn ascendent, and thus lerned ones for euer, to know in which maner I shulde come to the houre of the nyght, and to myn ascendent, as verily as maye ber taken by so smale an instrument. But natheless this rule in generall wyll I warne the forsayd: ffor make thou neuer none ascrédent at noone of the day. Take a iuste ascendent of thin Astrolabye, and have sette iustly a clocke, whan any celestyall body, by the whiche thou wenest gouerne thylke thynges, ben nye the southe lyne, for trust wel, whan the sonne is nere the meridionall lyne, the degree of the sonne remeueth so longe concentryke vpon thyn almycanteras, that sothely thou shalte erre fro the iuste ascendent. The same conclusyon say I by my centure of my sterre fyxe by the nyght, and ouermore by experyence I wote wel that fro oute orizont fro emeuen of the clocke vnto one in takynge of ♈ iuste ascendent in a portatyfe astrolabye, it is to harde to knowe, I mene from emeuen of the clocke before noone, tyl one of the clocke next folowynge: and for the more declaracyon lo here thy fygure nexte after this rule that foloweth.

¶ To knowe the degre of the sunne in thy zodiake by the dayes in ♈ back syde of thyne Astrolabye.

Whan thou wolte weten to reckon & knowe which is the day of the moneth that thou art in, and lay the rule of thy astrolabye, that is to say the alidatha vpon the day in the calender of thyne astrolabye, and he shall shewe the thy degre of the sunne.

¶ Special declaracion of the ascendent.

The ascendent sothly, is as wel in al nativites as in questyons, and as in electyons of tymes is a thynge, whiche that these astrologiens greatlye obseruen, wherefore me semeth conuenyent, sens I speake of the ascendent, to make of it a speciall declaracyon.

The ascendent sothly to take it at the largest, is thilke degree that ascendeth at any of these forsayd tymes on the first orizont: and therefore, if that any planet ascende at thilke same tyme in the forsaid same gre of his longitude, men say that thilke planette is in horoscopo, but sothly the house of that ascendent, that is to say, the first house or ♈ first angle, is a thynge more brod and large, for after the statutes of astrologiens, what celestyal body that is 5 degrees aboue thilke degre that ascrédeth on the orizont, or within that nombre, that is to sain nere the degre that ascendeth, yet reckon they thilke planette in the ascendent, and what planet that is vnder thilke degree that ascendeth the space of 15 degrees, yet sayne they that planette is like to him that is the houre of the ascendent. But sothely yf he passe the boundes of the forsayde spaces aboue or byneth, they sayne that thylke planette is fallynge fro the ascendent: yet saine these astrologiens that the ascendent and eke the lorde of the ascendent, may be shapen for to be fortunate or infortunate: as thus. Fortunate ascendent cleped they whan that no wycked planette of

Saturne

Saturne or Mars, or els the tayle of the dra gon is in the house of the ascendet, ne that no wicked planette haue no aspecte of enemyte vpon the ascendent: But they woll caste that they haue fortunate planet in her ascendent, and yet in hys felycyte, & than saye they that it is well. Furthermoze they sayne that fo3tune of an ascendent is the contrarye of t he se forsayd thinges. The lozde of the ascendent sayne they, that he is fortunate whan he is in good place foz the ascendent, and eke the lozd of the ascendent is in an angle oz in a succe dent where he is in hys dignite, and comfoz ted with frendely aspectes receyued, and eke that he may sene the ascendēt not retrograde ne combuste, ne ioyned with no shrewe in the same signe, ne that he be not in his discency on, ne reigned with no planette in his discen sions, ne haue vpon hym none aspecte infoz tunate, and than they sayne that he is wel. Nathelesse these ben obseruaūces of iudicial mater and rytes of paynyms, in whiche my spirite hathe no fayth ne knowynge of her horoscopum, foz they sayne that euery signe is departed in thre euen partes, by 10 degres and the like porcyon they clepen a face. And although a planette haue a latytude fro the ecliptyke, yet sayn some folke, so that the pla nette arise in that same signe, with any degre of the forsayd face, in whiche his longitude is reckened. And yet is the planette in horos copo be in natyuites oz in election.

¶ To knowe the very equacion of the de grees of the sonne, yf it so be that it fal betwyxe two almycanteras.

For almuch as ꝑ almicāteras of thyne Astrolabye ben com pouned by two & two, where as some almicanteras in son drie astrolabies be cōpowned by .i. or els by .ii. it is necessary to thy lerning, to teche the first to knowe and worche with thyn instrument: wherfoze whā that the degre of ꝑ sone falleth betwene two almycanteras, oz els yf thyne almycanteras ben grauen with ouer great a poynt of a com pace, foz bothe these thynges maye cause er rour as wel in knowyng of ꝑ tyde of the day as of the very ascendent. Thou muste wer ken in this wyse: sette the degre of the sonne vpon the hygher almycanteras as of bothe, And wayte wel where thy almurye toucheth the bozdure, and sette there a pryke of yrne, sette adowne agayne the degree of the sonne vpon the nether almycanteras of bothe, and set there another pryche: remeue than thy al mury in the bozdure euen amydes both pry ches, & this wol leaden iustly the degre of the sonne to sitte betwene bothe the almicāteras in hys right place. Laye than the label on the degre of the sonne, and fynde in the bozdure the very tyde of the day oz of the nyght. And also verely shalt thou fynde vpon thy west oriz zonte thyn ascendent.

¶ To knowe the sprynge of the dawnyng and the ende of the euenyng, the which ben cleped the two corpusculis.

Sette the nadyre of thy sonne vpon 18 degrees of heyght amonge thyn almi canteras on the west syde, and laye thy label on the degree of the sonne, and than shal the poynte of the label shewe the spryngе of the daye: also sette the nadyre of the sonne vpon the 18 degrees of heyght amonge thyn almi canteras on the est syde, and lay ouer thy la bel vpon the degre of the sonne, and with the poynte of thy label fynde in the bozdure the ende of thyn euenynge that is very nyght. The nadyre of the sonne is thylke degre that is opposyte to ꝑ degre of the sonne in the 2 signe, as thus. Euery degree of Aries by oz der, is nadyre to euery degree of Libra by oz der, and Taurus to Scorpion, Gemini to Sagitarius, Cancer to Capricorne, Leo to Aquary, Virgo to Pisces. And yf any degree in thy zodyake be derke, hys nadyre shal de clare hym.

¶ To knowe the arche of the day, that some folke callen the day artificial, fro the sonne rysyng tyl it go downe.

Sette the degre of the sonne vpon thyn Est oriz zonte, and laye thy label on the degree of the sonne, and at the poynte of thy label in the bozdure sette a pryche: turne than thy rete aboute, tyl the degre of the sonne sit vpon the weste oriz zonte, and laye the label vpon the same degre of the sonne, and at the poynte of the label sette another pryche. Re ken than the quantyte of tyme in the bozdure betwyxe bothe pryches, and take there thyne

arche of the day: the remnaūt of the bordure vnder the orizonte, is the arche of the nyght. Thus mayst thou reken bothe arches of euery porcion where that thou liuest, and by this maner of werkyng mayst thou se how longe that any sterre fyxe dwelleth aboue the erthe, fro the tyme that he ryseth tyl he go to reste. But the daye naturell, that is to sayne. 24. houres, is the reuolucyon of the equinoctial, with as moche partie of the zodyake, as the sonne of hys proper mouynge passeth in the meane whyle.

¶ To turne the houres inequalles, and the houres equalles.

To knowe the nombre of the degrees in the houres inequales, & departe hem by .15. and take there thyn houres equales.

To knowe the quantite of the day vulgare, that is to say, fro sprynge of the day vnto the very nyght.

Knowe thy quantyte of thyne coepuscles, as I haue it taught in the chapiter before, and adde hem to the arche of the day artificiall, and take there thy space of al þ hole day vulgare vnto the very nyght. In the same maner mayste thou werke to knowe the vulgare nyght.

¶ To knowe the houres inequales by daye.

Vnderstande wel that these houres inequales been cleped houres of þ planetes: And vnderstonde well þ somtyme ben the longer by daye thā they be by nyght, and somtyme contrarye. But vnderstād thou wel, þ euermore generally þ houres inequale of þ daye, & the houres inequale of the nyght, conteyneth .30. degrees of the bordure, þ which bordure is euermore answeryng to the degrees of the equinoctial, wherfore depart the arche of the daye artificial in .12. and take there the quantyte of the houre inequale by day, and if thou abate the quantite of the houre inequale by day out of 360. degrees, than shall the remnaunt that leueth perfourme the houre inequale by nyght

houres equales.

The quantytes of houres equales, that is to sayne the houres of the cloche, ben departed by .15. degrees alredy in the bordure of thy Astrolabye, as wel by nyght as by daye generally for euermore. What needeth any more declaracyon; wherfore whan the lyste to knowe howe many houres of the cloche ben passed, or any parte of any of these houres ben to comē fro suche a tyme to suche a tyme, by day or by nyght, knowe the degre of thy sonne, and laye thy label on it: thanne turne thy rete aboute ſoyntly with thy label, and with the point of it reken in the bordure fro the sonne aryſing in to þ same place there thou desyrest by day as by nyght. Thys conclusyon wol I declare ... the fourthe parte of the laste chapiter of thys treatyse, so openly that there shal lacke no worde that nedeth declaracyon.

¶ Special declaracyon of the houres of the planetes.

Vnderstāde wel that euermore fro the arysing of þ sonne til it go to rest þ nadire of the sonne shal shewe the houre of þ planet, and fro that tyme forwarde al the nyght tyl the sonne arise, than shal the very degre of the sonne shewe the houre of the planet. Ensample as thus. The .13 day of Marche fel vpon a saturday parauēture, and at the arising of the sonne I founde the seconde degre of Aries sittynge vpon myn est orizonte, al be it was but lytel. Than founde I the seconde degree of Libra nadyre of my sonne, descendynge on my west orizonte, vpon whiche west orizonte euery daye generally at the sonne arisyng entreth the houre of any planet, vnder þ forsayd weste orizonte, after the which planet the day beareth his name, & endeth in the nexte strike of the planet, vnder the forsayd west orizonte: and euer as the sonne clymbeth vpper and vpper, so gothe his nadyre downer & downer, & chynge fro suche strikes þ houres of planetes by order as they ystonden in heuen. The fyrste houre inequale of euery saturday is Saturn, and the seconde to Jupiter, þ thirde to Mars the fourthe to þ Sonne, the fyfthe to Venus, þ sixte to Mercurius, þ seuenthe to the Moone, and than ayen þ eighte to Saturne, the nineth to Jupiter, the tenthe to Mars, the eleuenth to

the

the sonne, the twelfth to Uenus. And nowe is my sone gon to rest as for that saterday, thā sheweth the very degre of the sone the houre of Mercury, entryng vnder my weste orizont at euen. And nexte hym succedeth the moone, and so forth by order planette after planet, in houre after houre al the nyght longe tyll the sonne aryse. Nowe ryseth the sonne the sonday by the morowe, & the nadyre of the sonne vpon the weste orizont, sheweth me ỳ entryng of the houre of the forsayd sonne. And in this maner succedeth planet vnder planet fro Saturne vnto the moone, and fro the moone vp agayne to Saturne houre after houre generally: and thus knowe I this conclusyon.

¶ To knowe with which degree of the zodyake any sterre fyxe in thyn astrolabye aryseth vpon the Est orizont, although the orizonte be in an other signe.

Sette the centure of the sterre vpon the est orizonte, and loke what degree of anye sygne that sytteth vpon the same orisonte at the same tyme: And vnderstande well that with the same degree aryseth the same sterre. And thys meruaylous arysinge with a stronge degree in another signe, is bycause that the latitude of the sterre fixe is either Northe or Southe fro the equinoctyal. But sothly the latytudes of planettes be comenly reckened fro the eclipsyke, bycause that none of hem declyneth but few degrees out fro the brede of the zodyake. And take good kepe of thys chapiter of arysing of celestyal bodyes, for there trusteth wel, that neyther moone neither sterre in our ambolyke orizonte, that ariseth with ỳ same degre of his longitude, saue in one case. and that is whan they haue no longitude fro the eclypsyke lyne. But neuer the lesse somtyme is euerysche of these planetes vnder the same lyne.

To knowe the declynacion of any degre in the zodiake, fro the equinoctial cercle.

Sette the degree of anye sygne vpon the lyne meridyonal, and reckon hys altytude in the almycanteras fro the Est orizonte vp to the same degree sette in the forsayde lyne, and sette there a pryche: Turne vp than thy reete and set the heed of Aries or Libra in the same meridional line, and set ther another pryche. And whan that this is doone, cōsider the altytudes of hem bothe: for sothly the difference of thilke altitude is the declynacyon of thilke degree fro the equinoctial. And yf it so be ỳ thylke degree be northwarde fro the equinoctial, than is his declinaciō north, and if it be southwarde, than it is southe.

To knowe for what latytude in any regyon the almycanteras in my tables ben compowned.

Reken how many degrees of almicanteras in the meridionall line, be from the cercle equinoctial vnto the sygnet or els from the pole artike vnto the north orizont, & for so great a latytude or so smale a latitude, is the table compowned.

To knowe the latytude of the sonne in the myddes of the day, that is cleped the altytude meridian.

Set the degre of thy sonne vpon ỳ lyne meridional, and reckon how many degrees of almycanteras ben betwyxe thyn est orizont, and the degree of thy sonne, and take there thyn altitude meridian, that is to sayn, the hyghest degre of ỳ sonne as for that daye. So mayst thou knowe in the same lyne the hyghest lyne that any starre fyx clymbeth by nyght, this is to sayne, that whan any starre fyx is passed the lyne meridyonal, than begynneth it to discende, and so doth the sonne.

¶ To knowe the degre of the Sonne by the reet for a maner cozzolyte.

Seke busely with thy rule the highest of the Sonne in myddes of the daye, tourne than thyn Astrolabye, & with a pryche of ynke marke the nombre of ỳ same altytude in the lyne meridional. Tourne than thy reet aboute tyl thou fynde a degre of thy zodyake accordyng with the pryche, this is to sayn, fyxyng on the pryche, and in soth thou shalt fynde but two degrees in al the zodiake of that condicion. And yet thilke two degrees ben in dyuers signes. Thā mayst thou lightly by the season of the yere know the signe in whiche is the sonne.

To knowe whiche day is lyke to other in length thzoughout the yere.

Loke

Loke whiche degrees ben ylyke from the heedys of Cancer and Capricorne, and loke whan the sonne is in anye of thilke degrees, than ben the dayes lyke of length, ꝑ is to sayn, that as longe is ꝑ day in that moneth, as was suche a daye in syche a moneth, there varyeth but lytel. Also if thou take two dayes naturelles in the yere ylike farre from eyther poinres of the equinoctial in the oppositye parties, thā as longe is the day artificial on that one day as on that other, and eke the contrarye.

¶ This chapiter is a maner declaracyon to conclusyons that folowyth.

Vnderstande well, that thy zodyake is departed into halfe cercles, fromme the heed of Capricorne vnto ꝑ heed of Cancer, & ayenwarde from the heed of Cancer vnto the heed of Capricorne. The hed of Capricorn is the lowest poynt, where as the sonne goth in wynter, and the heed of Cancer is the highest poynt, in whiche the sonne gothe in Sōmer. And therfore vnderstande wel, that any two degrees that ben ylyke far from any of these two heedes, trust wel that thilk two degrees ben ilyke declynacion, be it Southwarde or Northwarde, and the dayes of hem ben lyke of lengthe, and the myghtes also, & shadowes ylike, & ꝑ altytudes ylike at mydday for ever.

To knowe the very degre of any maner starre straunge after his latytude, though he be indeterminate in thyn astrolabye, sothly to the trouth thus he shal be knowen.

Take the altytude of thy starre whan he is on ꝑ Est syde of ꝑ lyne meridional as nygh as ꝑ mayst gesse, & take ꝑ ascendēt anone ryght by some maner star fixe whiche thou knowest and forget not the altytude of the first starre ne thyn ascendēt. And whā that this is done, aspye diligently whan thys same fyxed starre passeth any thyng to the southwestwarde, & catche hym anone right in the same nombre of the altitude on ꝑ west syde of this line meridional, as he was caught on the Est syde, & take a newe ascendent anone ryght by some maner fixe, the which that thou knowest, and forgete not this seconde ascendēt. And whan this is done, reken than howe many degrees ben bytwyxt the first ascendent & the seconde ascendēt, and reken wel the myddel degre bytwyxt bothe ascendentes, and set thilke myddel degree vpon thyn Est orizonte, and than loke what degre sit vpon the line meridional and take there the very degre of the ecliptike, in which the starre standeth for the tyme. For in the ecliptyke is the longytude of a celestial body reckened euen fro the halfe of the heed of Aries vnto the ende of Pisces, and his latytude is rekened after ꝑ quantite of his declynacyon North or South, towarde the poles of this werke. As thus, if it be of ꝑ sonne or any fix starre, reken hys latytude or his declynacyon fro the equinoctial cercle, and if it be of a planet, reken than the quantite of hys latytude from the ecliptike lyne, al be it so ꝑ from the equinoctial may the declynacion or the latitude of any bodi celestial be rekened, after ꝑ syght North or South, and after ꝑ quantite of his declynacion. And yet so may the latitude or the declynacyon of anye body celestyal, saue onely of the sonne, after his sight North or South. And after the quantite of his declynacyon be rekened from the ecliptike line, fro which line al planetes fōtyme decline, North or Southe, saue onely the forsayde Sonne.

To knowe the degrees of longitudes of fyxe starres, after that they ben determinat in thyn astrolabye, if it so be that they ben trewly set.

Sette the center of the sterre vpon the lyne merydional, and take kepe of thy zodyake, and loke what degree of anye sygne lyxte vpon the same lyne merydyonal at the same tyme, and there the degre in whiche the sterre standeth, and with the same degre cometh ꝑ same sterre vnto ꝑ same line from ꝑ orizonte.

To knowe in special the latytude of our centre, I meane after the altytude of Oxenforde & the hight of our pole.

Vnderstande well that as farre is the heed of Aryes or Lybra in the equinoctial frome our orizonte, as is the fyxed from the pole artyke, & as hye as the pole artyke from the orizonte, as the equinoctial is ferre from the fyxed, I preue it thus by the latytude of Oxenforde, vnderstande wel that the heyght of our pole artike from our north

orizonte

ozyzont is.51.degrees,and.50.mynutes,than is the syner from the pole artike.38.degrees & 10.minutes,than is the equinoctial from our syner.51.degrees,and.50 mynutes,thā is our southe ozyzonte from our equinoctial.38.degrees,and.10.minutes.Understāde wel this rekenyng also,forget not that the syner is.90 degrees of heyght from the ozyzonte,and our equinoctial is.90.degrees from out pole artike.Also thys shorte rule is soth that the latytude of any planet in a regyon is the distaūce from the syner vnto the equinoctial.

¶ To pryne the latytude of any place in a regyon by the prysse of the heyght of the pole artyke in that same place.

IN some winters nyght whan the firmamēt is clere & thicke sterred,wayte a time til ꝑ euery ster fyx sit line ryzt perpēdicular ouer ꝑ pole artik,& clepe ꝑ ster.A.& wayte another ster ꝑ sit lyne right vnder.A.& vnder the pole,and clepe ꝑ sterre.F.& vnderstand wel ꝑ.F.is not consydred but onely to declare that.A.ꝑ sit euer on ꝑ pol.Take than anone right the altytude of.A.from the ozyzonte & forget it not, let.A.and.F.go farwel tyl agayn̄ the dawnyng a great whyle,and come t'an agayne, and abyde tyl that.A.is euen vnder the pole vnder.F.for sothely than wyl.F.syt ouer the pol,take thā erysones the altytude of.A.from the ozyzonte,and note as wel the seconde altitude as the first altitude.And whan that this is done,reken howe many degrees ꝑ the first altytude.A.excedeth his altytude,& take halfe the ylke porcyon ꝑ is exceded,& adde it to his seconde altitude,and take there the eleuacion of the pole,and eke the altitude of thy region. For these two bē of one nombre,ꝑ is to sayn as many degrees as thy pol is eleuat,so moche is the latytude of thy regyon.Ensāple as thus.Paraventure the altytude of.A.in the euenynge is.62.degrees of heyght,than wyl the seconde altytude or the dawning be.21.ꝑ is to sayne,lesse than.92.that was his first altytude at euen.Take than ꝑ halfe of.92,& adde it to.21.that was hys seconde altytude,& thā hast thou the height of the pol & the latitude of thy regyon. But vnderstande wel to pryne this conclusion and many another faire conclusyon,thou mayst haue a plomet hangynge on a lyne hygher than thy heed on a perche & that lyne mote hange euen perpendiculer bytwyxe the pole and thyne eye,and than shalte thou se yt.A.syt euen ouer the pole and ouer F.at euen.And also yt.F.syt euen ouer ꝑ pole and ouer.A.or daye.

¶ Another conclusyon to pryne the heyght of the pole artyke from the ozyzont.

TAke any sterre fyxe that euer descendeth vnder the ozyzont in thylke regyon,and consyder his heyghest altitude and his lowest altytude from ꝑ ozyzont, and make a nombet of these altytudes, take than and abate halfe that nombre, and take there the eleuacyon of the pole artyke in that same regyon,& for the more declaracyon.&c.

o 82. 51. o 20.

Another conclusyon to pryne the latitude of a regyon that ye ben in.

UNderstande well that the latytude of anye place in a regyon is verely the space betwyxe the signe of hem that dwellen there,& ꝑ equinoctial cercle, nerthe or southe, takynge the measure in the merydyonal line, as sheweth in the almycanteras of thyn astrolabye,& thylke space is as muche as the pole artike is hye in the same place from ꝑ ozyzont And than is the depressyon of the pole artenstyke beneth the ozyzont, the same quantyte of space,neyther more ne lesse,thā if thou desire to knowe this latytude of the regyon, take ꝑ altitude of the sonne in the myddle of the day whan the Sonne is in the heed of Aries or of Libra, for than moueth the sonne in the lyne equinoctial, and abate the nombre of ꝑ same Sōnes altitude out of.90 degrees, and than is the remnaūt of the nombre that leueth the altitude of the regyon, as thus. I suppose ꝑ the sonne is thylke daye at noone.38.degrees of heyght, abate than.38.degrees out of.90. so leueth there.52.than is.52.degrees ꝑ latitude,I say not this but for ensample,for wel I wote the latytude of Oxeforde is certayn mynutes lesse.Nowe if it so be that the thynketh to longe a tarryng to abyde tyl that the sonne be in the heed of Aries or of Libra,than wayte whan that the sonne is in anye other degre of the zodyake,& consyder the degre of this declinacion be northward from the equinoctial, abate than from the sonnes altitude at noon the nombre of his declinacion,& than

hast

than

hast thou the highest of the heedes of Aries & Libra, as thus. My Sone paraventure is in the.10.degre of Leo almoste.& is.6.of heyght at noone,& his declynacion is almost.18 degrees northwarde from the equinoctial, abate than thilke.18.degrees of declinacion out of ꝑ altitude at noone, thā leueth.38.degrees, lo there the heed of Aries or Libra & thyn equinoctial in that regyon. Also if it so be that the Sones declinacion be southwarde frō the equinoctial, adde than thilk declinacion to the altitude of the sonne at noone, & take there the heedes of Aries and Libra & thyn equinoctial, abate than the heyght of the equinoctial out of.90. degrees, & than leueth there.38.degrees, that is the distaunce of the regyon from the equinoctial of any sterre fyxe that thou knowest & take the neither elongacion lengthing from the same equinoctiall lyne, and werke after ꝑ maner aforesayd.

¶ Declaracion of the ascencion of sygnes as wel in the circle directe, as in oblique.

The excellence of the sphere solide amonges other noble conclusyons sheweth manifest the dyuers ascencions of signes in dyuers places, as wel in rizt cercles as in embolyse cercle. These auctours wryten ꝑ thilke signe is cleped of right ascencion, with which the more part of the cercle equinoctial and the lesse parte of the zodiake ascendeth, & thilke signe ascendeth embolyse, with which the lesse of the zodiake equinoctial, & the more parte of the zodyake ascendeth, and euermo the arche of the day and the arche of the night is there ylyke longe, & the sonne twyse euery yere passyng thzough the signet of her heed & 2.somers and.2.wynters in a yere haue these forsayde people, and the almicanteras in her Astrolabye ben streyght as a lyne, so hathe shewed in this fygure. The vtilities to know the ascencions of signes in the right circle is this. Trust wel that be mediacyons of thilke ascencions these Astrologyens by her tables and her instrumentes knowen verely the ascēcion of euery degre and minute in al the zodiake in the embolyse cercle, as shal be shewed. And note that this forsayd ryght orizonte ꝑ is cleped orizont rectum, deuideth the equinoctial in to right angles, and embolyse orizonte, where as the pole is enhaunced vpon ꝑ orizonte, ouercometh the equinoctial embolyse angles.

¶ This is the conclusion to knowe the ascencyons of sygnes in the right cercle, that is circulus directus.

Sette the heed of what signe the lyst to knowe the ascendynge on the ryght cercle vpon the lyne merydyonal, and wayte where thyn almury toucheth the bordure, & set there a pryke, tourne than thy rete westwarde tyl the ende of the forsayd signe, sette vpon the merydyonal lyne, & eftsones wayte where thyn almury toucheth ꝑ bordure, and set there another pricke. Reken than the nombres of degrees in the bordure betwixe both prickes, & take than the ascencion of the signe in the right cercle, and thus maist thou worke wyth euery porcyon of the zodyake.

¶ To knowe the ascencyons of signes in the embolyse cercle in euery regyon, Imene in circulo obliquo.

Sette the heed of the sygnes whiche as the lyste to knowe hys ascencyon vpon the Est orizonte and wayte where thyne almury toucheth the bordure, and sette there a pricke, tourne than thy rete vpwarde tyll the ende of the same signe, set vpon the Est orizonte and wayte eftsones where as thyne almury toucheth the bordure, & set there another pricke, reken than the nombre of the degrees in the bordure betwixe both prickes, & take there the ascencion of the signe in the embolyse cercle. And vnderstand wel, that al the sygnes in the zodiake, from the heed of Aries vnto the ende of Virgo, ben cleped signes of the Northe from the equinoctial, & these signes arisen betwyxe the very Est and the very Northe in our orizont generally for euer: and al the sygnes from ꝑ heed of Libra vnto the ende of Pisces, bē cleped sygnes of ꝑ southe fro the equinoctial, and these signes aryssen euermore betwyxe the very Est and the very southe in our orizonte, also euery sygne betwyxe the heed of Capricorne vnto the ende of Gemini aryseth in our orizonte in lesse thā two houres equales, and these same signes from the heed of Capricorne vnto the ende of Gemini bē called tortuous signes or croked sygnes, for they risen embolyse in our orizont and these croked signes ben obedient to ꝑ signes that ben of the right ascencion. These signes

nes of right ascension ben fro the heed of Cancer vnto the heed of Sagitary, and these signes aryseu moze vpzyght than both the other and therfoze they ben called soueraine signes and euery of hem aryseth in moze space than in two houres, of which sygnes Gemini obeyeth to Cancer, and Taurus to Leo, and Aries to Virgo, Pisces to Libra, Aquarius to Scozpio, and Capricornus to Sagittary, and thus fourmoze two sygnes that ben like ferre from the heed of Capzycozne obeyeth euerych of hem to other.

¶ To knowe iustly the foure quarters of the wozld, as Eest, west, South, & Nozth.

TAke the altytude of thy sonne whan thou lyste, and note well the quarter of the wozlde in whyche the sonne is from the tyme by the almutes, tourne than thyn astrolaby and set the degree of the sonne in the almycantras of his altytude, on thylke syde that the Sonne standeth, as is in maner of takyng of houres, and ley thy labell on the degre of the Sõne, and reken howe many degrees of the Sonne ben bytweene the lyne meridional and the poynt of thy labell, and note wel the nombres. Tourne than agayne thyne astrolabye, and set the poynt of thy great rule there thou takest thyn altitudes vpon as many degrees in his bozdure from hys meridionall, as was the poynte of thy labell from the lyne meredyonall on the wombe syde. Take than thyne Astrolabye with both handes sadly and slyly, and let the sonne shyne thzoughe bothe holes of thy rule, and slily in thilke shynynge ley thyne astrolaby couche adoun euen vpon a playne grounde, & than wyll the meridional lyne of thyn astrolaby be euen southe, and the Eest lyne wyll lye euen Eest, and the west lyne West, and þ Nozth lyne Nozthe, so that thou werke softely and auysely in þ couchynge, and thou haste thus the foure quarters of the fyrmament. &c.

¶ To knowe the altitude of planettes from þ way of the sonne, whether they ben nozth oz south fro the way afozesayde.

TAke whan a planette is on the lyne meridyonal, yf that her altytude be of the same heyghte, that is the degree of the Sonne foz that daye, and than is the planette in the very way of the sonne, and hath no latitude. And yf þ altitude of the planette be hyer than the degree of the Sonne, than is the planette Nozth from the waye of the sygne Southe, a quantite of latytude as sheweth by thyne Almicantras and yf the altytude be lesse than the degree of the sonne, than is the planette South from þ way of the Sonne, suche a quantyte of latytude as sheweth by thyne almycantras. Thys is to sayne from the waye of the Sonne in euerye place of the zodyake, foz on the mozowe the sonne wyll be in another degre.

¶ Foz to knowe the sygnet foz the arisyng of the Sonne, this is to sayne, the party of the ozyzonte in whyche the Sonne aryseth.

THou must fyrst consyder þ the Sõne ariseth not in the very Eest sygnette, somtyme by Nozthe eest & somtyme by southe Eest, sothly the sonne aryseth euermoze in the verye Eest in oure ozizont, but yf he be in the heed of Aryes oz Libra. Nowe is thyne ozizont departed in to .24. partes of thy mynutes in sygnyfycacyon of .24. partes of the wozlde, though it be so that thypmeu reke all that parties in .32. Than is there no moze but wayte in the whiche mynute that þ sonne entreth at his aryssynge, and take there the signet of the ryssyng of the sonne.

¶ The maner of deuysyon of thyn astrolabie is thus enioyned, as in this case.

FYrst it is deuyded in foure places principally vp the lyne that cometh fro the Eest to the West, and than with another lyne that gothe fro the South to the Nozthe, than is it deuyded in smale parties of minutes, as Eest and eest by south, where that is þ first minute aboue the eest lyne, and so fozth fro partye to partye tyl þ thou come agayne to þ eest lyne. Thus thou myght vnderstande the sygnet of euery sterre in which partie he ariseth.

¶ To knowe in which partye of the firmament is the conjunction.

COnsyder the tyme of the conjunctyon by the kalender, as thus: howe manye houres that the conjunctyon is fro myddaye of the day before, as sheweth the canon of the kalender. Reken than that nombre in the bozdure of thyne astrolabye, as thou were wont

to do in knowyng of the houres of the day or of the night, and lay thy label ouer the degree of the sonne, than wyl the poynte of the label syt vpon the houre of the conjunction. Loke than in whiche minute the degree of the sonne sytteth, and in that partie of the firmament is the conjunction.

¶ To know the sygnet of the altitude of the sonne.

This is no more to say, but any tyme of the day take the altitude of the sonne, and by the minutes in whiche he ascendeth thou might se in whiche partie of the firmament he is, & in the same wyse might thou se by night of any sterre whether he sit est, west, or south, or any part betwixe, after þ name of the minutes in which the sterre standeth.

¶ To know sothly the longitude of the mone or any planet that hath no latitude fro the tyme of the eclyptike lyne.

Take the altitude of the mone, and reke thyn altitude vp among thyne almicãtras on which side that the mone standeth, & set there a pricke. Take than anon rizt vpon the mones side þ altitude of euery sterre fixe that thou knowest, and set his centre vpõ his altitude amonge thyne almicantras there þ sterre is foũden, wayte than of which degre the zodiake is, to whiche the pricke of the altitude of the mone, and there take the degree in whiche the mone standeth This conclusion is very sothe of the sterres in thyne astrolabie, & stãdeth after the trouth. Some treatise of the astrolabie maketh none excepcyon whether þ mone haue latitude or none, nor whether syde of the mone the altitude of the sterre be foũde. And note if the mone shewe herselfe by daye, than thou mayst wozche the same conclusyon by the sonne as wel as by the sterre fyxe.

¶ This is the werchynge of the conclusyons to knowe whether any planet be directe or retrograde.

Take the altitude of any sterre that is cleped a planet and note it wel, anone right take the altitude of some sterre fyxe that thou knowest & note it wel also, & come agayne the thirde or the fourth night nexte folowing, for than thou shalte perceyue well the meuynge of the planet whether he meue forwarde or backward, & wayte wel than whan the sterre fyxe is in this same altytude þ she was whan thou toke her first altitude of the forsayd planet & note it wel, for trust wel if so be þ þ planet be in the right syde of the meridional lyne, so þ his seconde altitude be lesse than þ fyrste altitude was, thã is þ planet direct, & yf he be in the west syde in þ condicyon, than is he retrograde, & if so be þ this planet be in the est syde whan his altytude is take, so that the second altitude be more than his first altitude, than is he retrograde, and if he be in the west syde of the lyne meridional, than is he direct but the contrary mouynge of these parties is the course of the mone, for sothly þ mone moueth the contrarye fro eyther planetres in her eclyptyke lyne, but in none other maner.

¶ The conclusyon of equacyons of houses after the astrolabye.

Set the begynnynge of the degree that ascendeth vpõ the ende of the 8 houre inequal, than wyll the lyne of the seconde house syt vpon the lyne of mydnyght, remeue than the degree that ascendeth, and set hym vpon the ende of the 10 houre inequal, than wyl the begynnynge of the 3 house syte vpon the mydnyght lyne, bringe vp agayne the same degre that ascendeth first, and set him vpon the est orizont, and than wyll the begynnynge of the 4 house syt vpon the mydnyghte lyne. Take than the nadere of the degree that ascendeth firste and set him vpon the ende of the 2 houre inequal, and than wyll the begynnynge of the 5 house syt vpon the mydnyght lyne. Take than the nadere of the ascendent and set hym vpon the ende of the 4 houre inequall, & than wyll the begynnynge of the 6 house set vpon the mydnyght lyne. The begynnynge of the 7 house is nadere of the ascendent, and the begynnyng of the 8 house is nadere of the secõd, and the begynnyng of the 9 house is nadere of the 3 & the begynnig of þ 10 house is nadere of the 4 and the begynnynge of the 11 house is nadere of the 5 and the begynnyng of þ 12 house is nadere of the 6 house.

¶ Another maner of equacyons of houses by the astrolabye.

Take

Take thyn ascendent, and than thou hast the 4 angles, for wel thou wotest that the opposite is of thyn ascendent, ꝑ is to say, the begynnyng of ꝑ 7 house lyt vpon the west orizont, & the begynnynge of the 10 house vpon the lyne meridional, & his opposite vpon the lyne of midnyght than lay thy la[illegible] vpon the degre ꝑ ascendeth and reken thanne fro the poynte of thy label all the degrees in the bordure til that thou come to the meridional lyne, and departe all thylke degrees in to 3 euen parties, and take there the euen portions of 3 other houses for to lay thy label ouer euery of these 3 partyes, and than thou might se by the label in ꝑ zodiake the begynnynge of these 3 houses fro the ascendent, that is to saye the 12 [illegible]yte aboue thyne ascendent, and than the 11 house and the 10 house vpon the meridional lyne, as I tyrst layde the same wyse wyche fro the ascendent down to the lyne of mydnight, and thus thou hast thre houses, that is to saye, the begynnynge of the seconde, the thyrde, and the fourth house: than is the nadyre of these thre houses, the begynnynge of these 3 houses that foloweth.

¶ To fynde the lyne meridyonal, to dwelfyre in any certayne place.

Take a rounde plate of metal for warping the bordet the better, and make therupon a iust compace a lytel within the bordure, and lay this rounde plate vpon an euen grounde, or some euen stone, or on a euen stocke fyxe in the grounde, and laye it euen by a rule in the centre of the compace, lyche an euen pynne or a wyre vpright, the smaller the better, and sette thy pynne or thy wyre by a plóme rules ende vpright euen, and let this pyn be no lenger than a quarter, of thy diameter of the compace fro the pynne, and wayte besyly aboute 10 or 11 of the clocke whan the sonne sheweth, whan the shadowe of the pynne entreth any thing within the cercle of ꝑ compace one heere brede, & make there a pricke with ynke: abyde then styll wayteynge on the sonne after one of the cloke, tyll that the shadowe of the pynne or of the wyre passe any thing out of the cercle or compace, be it neuer so lytel, and set there a pricke. Take than a compace and mesure euen the myddle betwyxe bothe prickes, and sette there a pricke: take than a rule and drawe a stryke euen fro the pyn vnto ꝑ myddle pricke, and take there the lyne meridyonall for euermore, as in the same place. And if thou drawe a crosse ouerthwarte the compace iustely ouer the lyne meridyonal, than haste thou est and west, and perconsequens the oppositeyte, that is southe and noxthe.

¶ Discrypcion of the meridional lyne, and of the longitudes & latytudes of cytes and townes as wel as of climates.

This line meridyonal is but a maner discripcion of a lyne imagined, ꝑ passethe vpon the poles of the world, and by the sygnet of our heed: & it is cleped the signet, for in what place ꝑ any man is at any time of ꝑ yere whan the sonne by meuyng of ꝑ fyrmamente cōmeth to his merydional place, than is it the very mydday ꝑ we clepe noone, & therefore it is cleped the lyne of mydday. Than take hede that euermore of two cites or of two townes, of which the one approcheth nerer the est thā doth ꝑ other towne, trust wel that thilke two townes haue dyuers meridyans. Take kepe also ꝑ the arche of the equinoctial, that is conteined and bounded betwene the two meridyans, is cleped the longitude of the towne. And if so be that two townes haue meridyan like, or one meridyan, than is the distaunce of hem bothe lyke farre: & in this maner they chaūge not her meridyā, but sothly they chaunge her almycanteras for the haunsynge of the poole and the distaunce of the sonne. The longytude of a clymate maye be cleaped the space of the erthe, fro the begynnyng of the fyrst clymate, vnto the laste ende of the same clymate, euen dyrecte ayenst the pole artyke, thus saye some auctours. And some clerkes saye, that yf men cleape the latytude of a centre the arche meridyan, that is conteyned or intercepte betwyxe the signet and the equinoctiall, than they saye that the distannce fro the equinoctial vnto the ende of the clymate, euen ayenst the poole artyke, is the longitude of the clymate for south

¶ To know with what degre of the zodyake that any planet ascendeth on the orizont, where his latytude be noxth or south.

Knowe by thyne almynake the degree of the ecclyptike of any signe, in which ꝑ the planet is reckened for to be, and that is cleped the degre of his longitude.

And know also the degre of his latytude fro the ecliptyke, northe or southe, and by these ensamples folowyng in especial, þ maist worche with euery sygne of the zodyake. The longytude peraventure of Venus or of an other planette was of Capricorne, & the latitude of him northward degrees fro the ecliptyke lyne, than toke I a subtil compace, & cleped the one poynte of my cõpace A, & that other F, thã toke I the poynt of A, & set it in the ecliptike lyne, and my zodiake in the degree of the longitude of bredes, that is to say, in the heed of Capricorne, and than set I the poynt of F, bpward in the same signe, bycause þ the altytude was northe, bpon the latytude of Venus, that is to say, in the degre fro the heed of Capricorne, and thus haue I þ degrees betwyxe my two pricks, than layde I downe softly my compace, and set the degree of the longitude bpon the orizont, than toke I and waxed my labell in maner of a payre of tables, to receyue bystinctly the pricke of my compace, than toke I this forsayde label, and layde it fyxe ouer the degree of my longitude, than tooke I bp my compace & the poynte of A, in the waxe of my label, as I coude gesse, ouer the ecliptyke line in the ende of the longitude, I sette the point ouer endelonge on the label, bpon the space of the latytude inward and on the zodiake, that is to saye northwarde fro the ecliptike: Than layde I downe my compace, and loked wel in the way bpon the eclyptike of A, and F, than turned I my rete til that the pricke of F, sate bpon the orizont: Than sawe I wel that the body of Venus in her latytude of degrees septemtrionals, ascẽdeth in the ende of degre fro the heed of Capricorne. And note that in thys maner thou myghtest worche wyth any latytude septemtrionall in al sygnes: But sourthly the latytude meridyonal of a planette in Capricorne may not be take, bycause of the lytell space betwyxe þ ecliptike and the bordure of the astrolabye, and sykerly in all other sygnes it may be take. Also the degre peraventure of Jubiter or of any other planette was in the firste degree of Pisces in longitude, and hys latytude was degrees meridyonall. Than toke I the poynte of A, and sette it in the first degree of Pisces on the ecliptyke, than set I the poynt downwarde of F, in the same signe, bycause that þ latytude was south degrees, that is to say, fro þ heed of Pisces, and thus haue I degrees betwixe both prickes. Thã set I the degree of the longitude bpon the orizont, than toke I my label and layde him fyxe bpon the degree of longitude, than sette I the poynte of A, on my labell euen ouer the ecliptike lyne, in the ende of the degree of the longitude, and I sette the poynte of F, endelonge on my labell the space of degrees of the latytude outwarde fro the zodiake, that is to saye, southwarde fro the ecliptyke towarde the bordure, and than tourned I my rete til the poynte of F, sate bpon the orizonte, than sawe I well that the body of Jupiter in hys latitude of degrees meridional, ascẽdeth with the degree of Pisces in horescopo. And in this maner thou mayst worche with any latytude as I sayd first, saue in Capricorne. And thou wylte plye this craft wyth the arysyng of the moone, looke thou reken well the course of houre by houre, for she dwelleth in a degre of her longitude but a lytel whyle, as thou wost well: but neuertheles, if þ legest wel her bey meuyng by þ tables, or after her course houre by houre, thou shalt do wel ynoughe.

Umbra recta.

If thou wylte worche with Umbra recta, yf thou myghte come to the base of the towre, in thys maner shalte thou worche: Take the altitude of þ toure with both holes, so þ the rule lye euen on a poynte. Ensample, as thus. I se him thrOughe the pointe of 4, than mete I the space betwyxe me & the tour, & I fynde it 20 foote, than beholde I howe 4 is to 12, and I fynde it is the thirde parte of 12. Right so the space betwixe the & the toure is the third part of the altitude of the toure: than thrise 20 foote is the hyghest of the toure, wt the addycion of thyn owne body fro thyne eye. Yf the rule fall on 5, than is 5 tymes 12 þ highest of þ toure.

Umbra versa.

If thou mayste not come to þ base of þ toure, and þ fyxe him thrOugh the nombre of 1, set there a pricke at thy foote, thã go nere the toure, and se him thrOugh at the point of 2, and set there another pricke, & than beholde howe 1 hath him to 12, and thou shalte fynde that he hath him 12 sythes, than beholde how

haue hym 12, and thou shalte fynde it 6 fyches, and therfore the space betwyxe 2 prickes is 6 tymes thyne altytude. And note that at the first altytude of 1 thou settest a pricke, and afterwarde whan thou seest hym thrugh at 2, there thou settest a pryck 2, than thou fyndest betweene 8 foote, than thou shalte fynde that 10 is the 6 parte of 80, than is a fote the altitude of the toure, but yf it fall vpon another poynte, as thus. It falleth on 6 at the seconde takynge it, whan it falleth on 4, than shalte thou fynde that 6 is the seconde parte of 12, and 4 is the thyrde parte of 12 by the thirde parte, that is to say, the space betwixe 2 prickes, twyse the height of ꝑ toure, & if the differrence were 3, than wolde it be thre times the height, Et sic de ceteris. Another maner werchynge by vmbra recta. If thou mayste not come by the base of ꝑ toure, wirche in this wyse: Set thy rule vpon 1 tyll thou se the altytude, and set at thy fote a pricke, and than set thy rule vpon 2, and so do in the same maner: than loke what is the differrence betwixe 1 and 2, and thou shalte fynde that it is one. Than mesure ꝑ space betwyxe ꝑ two prickes, and that is the 12 parte of the altytude of the toure, and so of al other.

Umbra recta.

If thy rule fall vpon the 8 poynte on the right shadowe, than make the fygure of 8, thā loke howe moche space of ꝑ feete is betwixe the and the toure, and multiply ꝑ by 12, and whan thou halte multiplyed it by the same nombre, than deuide it by the nombre of 8, and kepe the residue, and adde therto thy heyght vnto thyn eye, to the residue, and that shal be the very heyght of the toure. And thus mayde thou worch on the same syde from one to 12. &c.

Umbra recta.

Another maner of worknyng vpon ꝑ same syde. Loke vpon what poynt thy rule fal leth whā ꝑ seest the toppe of the tour thorow the two holes, and than mete the space frome thy fote to the base of the toure, & right as the nombre of the poynt hath him selfe to 12, right so the mesure betwixe the and the toure, hath hym selfe to the heyght of the same toure. Ensample as thus. I set case thy rule fall vpon 8, thā is 8 two thyrd partes of 12, so is ꝑ space two thirde partes of the toure.

Umbra versa.

To knowe the heyght by the poyntes of Umbra versa. If thy rule fal vpon 3 whan thou seest the toppe of the toure, set a pricke there thy foote standeth, & go nere tyl ꝑ mayste se the same toppe at the poinre of 4, and set ther another pricke: than mete howe many foote is betwyxe the two prickes, & the height vppe to thyne eye, and that shal be the heyghte of the toure. And note that 3 is the 4 parte of 12, and 4 is the 3 parte of 12. Nowe passeth 4 the nombre of 3 by dystaunce of 1, therfore ꝑ same space with thy heyght to thyn eye, is ꝑ heyght of the toure. And if it were so that ther were two or thre distaūces in the nōbres, so shuld the mesure betwyxe the prickes by twyse or thryse the heyght of the toure.

Umbra recta.

To knowe the byghte yf thou mayste not come to the base of the thig, set thy rule vpō what poynt ꝑ wylt, so ꝑ thou maiest se the toppe of the thinge thorow the two holes, and make a marke there as thy foote stondeth, & go nere or ferther tyl thou maist se it thorow another poynt, and make there another marke, & loke what differēce is betwyxe the two poyntes in the scale, and right as that difference hath him to 12, right so the spaces betwixe ꝑ two markes, hath him to the height of the thyng. Ensample. I set the case ꝑ thou seest it thorowe the poynte of 4, and after at the poynte of 3. Nowe passeth the nombre of 4 the nombre of 3 the distaunce of 1, and right as this differēce of one hath him selfe to 12, right so the mesure betwyxe bothe the markes, hathe hym to the heyght of the same thyng, puttyng therto the height of thy selfe to thyn eye. And thus maist thou werke from 1 to 12.

Umbra versa.

Ferthermore, if thou wylt know in Umbra versa, by the craft of vmbra recta, I suppose to take thine altytude at the poynt of 4 & makest a marke, and thā thou goest nere tyl thou hatte it at the poynte of 3 and makest there a-

wether marke, than muste thou deuyde 144 by 4, the nombre that cometh thereof shall be 36, and after deuyde 144 by 3, and the nombre that cometh therof is 48, than loke what difference is betwyxe 36 & 48, and that shalt thou fynde 12, & right as 12 hath him to 12, so the space betwyxe the two pryckes, hath hym to the altitude of the thing.

Here endeth the conclusyons of the Astrolabye.

The complaynt of the blacke knyght.

IN May whan Flora ye freshe lusty quene
The soyle hathe clad, in grene, reed, and whyght
And Phebus gan to shede his stremes shene
Amydde the bulle, with all the beames bryght
And Lucifer, to chace away the nyght
Ayen the morowe our orizont hath take
To byd al louers out of her slepe awake

And hertes heuy for to recomforte
From dyerysheed, of heuy nightes sorowe
Nature bad hem ryse, and hem disporte
Ayen the goodly glad grey morowe
And hope also, with styrt Johan to borowe
Bad in dysspyte of Daunger and Dispayre
For to take the holsome lusty ayre

And with a sythe I gan for to abreyde
Out of my slombre, and sodaynly vp sterte
As he (alas) that nygh for sorow deyde
My sycknesse sare aye so nye my herte
But for to fynde socour of my smerte
Or at the lest some release of my peyne
That me so sore halte in euery veyne

I rose anon, and thought I wolde gone
In to the wodde, to here the bryddes synge
Whan that the mysty vapoure was agone
And clere and fayre was the morwyng
The dewe also lyke syluer in shynyng
Upon the leaues, as any baume swete
Tyl fryr Tytan with his persaunt hete

Had dryed vp the lusty lycour newe
Upon the herbes in the grene mede
And that the flowres of many dyuers hewe
Upon her stalkes gon for to spredе
And for to splaye out her leues in brede
Agayne the sonne, golde burned in his spere
That down to hem cast his beames clere

And by a ryuer forth I gan coste
Of water clere, as bryzt or cristal
Tyl at the last I founde a lytel wey
Towarde a parke, enclosed with a wal
In compace rounde, and by a gate smal
Who so that wold, freely myght gone
In to this parke, walled with grene stone

And in I went to here the bryddes songe
Which on the braunches, dyd in plain & bas
So loude sange, that al the woode ronge
Lyke as it shulde shyuer in peces smale
And as me thought, that the nyghtyngale
With so great myght, her voice gan out wrest
Right as her herte for loue wolde brest

The soyle was playn, smoth, & wonder soft
Al ouerspradd with tapettes that Nature
Had made her selfe: couered eke a loft
With bowes grene, the flowres for to cure
That in her beautie they may long endure
From al assaute of Phebus feruent fere
Which in his sphere so hotte shone and clere

The ayre attempre, and the smothe wynde
Of zepherus, amonge the blosomes whyte
So holsom was, & so norysshyng by kynde
That smale buddes, and roūd blosomes lyte,
In maner gan of her bryethe delyte
To yeue vs hope there frute shal take
Ayenst Autumpne redy for to shake

I sawe the Daphene closed vnder rynde
Grene Laurer, and the holsome Pyne
The Pyrre also, that wepeth cure of kynde
The Cedres hye, vpright as a lyne
The fyberte eke, ye lowe doth enclyne
Her bowes grene, to the erthe adoun
Unto her knyght called Demophoun

There sawe I eke the freshe hauthorne
In whyte motley, that so swote doth smel
Asshe, fyrre, & oke, with many a yong acorne
And many a tree mo than I can tel
And me before I sawe a lytel wel
That had his course, as I gan beholde

Under

vnder an hyl, with quicke stremes colde

The grauel golde, the water pure as glasse
The bankes rounde, the wel enuyronyng
And softe as velvet the yonge grasse
That therupon lustely came springynge
The sute of trees aboute compassynge
Her shadowe cast, closyng the wel rounde
And al the herbes growyng on the grounde

The water was so holsome, and so vertuous
Thorowe might of herbes growyng besyde
Nor lyke the welle where as Narcisus
Yslayne was, thorow vengeaunce of Cupide
Where so couertly he dyd hyde
The grayne of dethe vpon eche brynke
That dethe mote folowe, who ye euer drynke

Ne lyke the pytte of the Pegace
Vnder Parnaso, where poetes slepte
Nor lyke the welle of pure chastyte
Whiche ye Diane with her nymphes kepte
Whan she naked in to the water lepte
That slowe Acteon with her hondes fel
Onely for he came so nyghe the wel

But thys welle that I here reherse
So holsome was, that it wolde aswage
Bolen hertes, and the venym perce
Of pensyfeherd, withal the cruel rage
And ouer more refreshe the vysage
Of hem that were in any weryneſſe
Of great labour, or fallen in dystresse

And I ye had thorowe daunger & disdayne
So dyu a thrust, thought I wolde assay
To taste a draught of thys welle or twayne
My bytter langour if it myght alaye
And on the banke anone downe I laye
And with myne heed, vnto ye welle I raught
And of the water dranke I a good draught

Wherof me thought I was refreshed wele
Of the brennyng that sate so nye my herte
That verily anone I gan to fele
In huge parte released of my smerte
And therwithal anone vp I sterte
And thought I wolde walke and se more
Forthe in the parke, and in the holtes hore

And through a launde as I yede a pace
And gan aboute faste to beholde
I founde anone a delectable place
That was beset with trees yonge and olde
Whose names here for me shal not be tolde
Amydde of whiche stode an herber grene
That decked was, with colours new & clene

Thys herber was ful of floures fresshe
In to the whiche, as I beholde gan
Betwyxe an hulfere and a wodbynde
As I was ware, I sawe where lay a man
In blacke, and whyte colour pale and wan
And wonder deedly also of hys hewe
Of hurtes grene, and freshe woundes newe

And ouermore dystrayned with sycknesse
Besyde al thys he was ful grenously
For vpon hym he had an hote accesse
That day by day hym shoke ful petously
So that for cõstraynynge of hys malady
And hertly wo, thus syenge al alone
It was a dethe for to here hym grone

Wherof astonyed, my fote I gan withdrawe
Greatly wondryng what it myght be
That he so laye, and had no felawe
Ne that I coude no wyght with hym se
Wherof I had routhe, and eke pyte
And gan anone, so softely as I coude
Amonge the bushes prynely me to shroude

If that I myght in any wyse aspye
What was the cause of hys deedly wo
Or why that he so petously gan crye
On hys fortune, and on vre also
With al my myght I layed an ere to
Euery worde, to marke what he sayde
Out of hys swough amonge as he abrayde

But fyrst, if I shulde make mencyon
Of hys persone, and playnly hym discryue
He was in sothe, without exceptyon
To speke of manhode, one the best on lyue
There may no man ayen trouth stryue
For of hys tyme, and of hys age also
He proued was, there men shuld haue ado

For one the best therto of brede and length
So wel vmade by good proporcyon
If he had be in hys delyuer strength
But thought and sickneſſe were occasyon
That he thus lay in lamentacyon
Grufle on the grounde, in place desolate
Sole by hym selfe, awhaped and amate

And for me semeth that it is fytyng
Hys wordes also put in remembraunce
To me that heard al hys complaynyng
And al the grounde of hys woful chaunce
If there withal I may you do pleasaunce
I wol to you so as I can anone
Lyke as he sayde, reherce euerychone

But who shal helpe me nowe to complayne
Or who shal nowe my syke eye or lede
O Niobe, let nowe thy teares rayne
In to my penne, and helpe eke in nede
Thou woful Myrre, ꝑ feleſt myne herte blede
Of pytous wo, and myn hande eke quake
Whan that I wryte, for thys mannes sake

For vnto wo accordeth complayning
And doleful chere vnto heuynesse
To sorowe also, syghyng and weepyng
And pytous mournyng vnto dreryneſſe
And wo that shal wryte of diſtreſſe
In party nedeth to knowe fryngly
Cause and roote of al suche malady

But I alas, that am of wytte but dul
And haue no knowyng of suche matere
For to diſcryue, and wryte at the ful
The woful complaynte, which ꝑ ye shal here
But euen lyke as dothe a skryuenere
That can no more, what that he shal wryte
But as hys mayſter beſyde dothe endyte

Ryght so fare I, that of no sentement
Haue right naught in concluſyon
But as I herde whan I was preſent
This man complayne, with a pytous soun
For euen lyke without addicionn
Or diſcrecyon, eyther more or leſſe
For to reherſe anone I wol me dreſſe

And if that any nowe be in thys place
That fele in loue brennynge or feruence
Or hyndred were to hys ladyes grace
With false tonges, that with peſtylence
Slee trewe men, that never dyd offence
In worde nor dede, ne in her entent
If any suche be here nowe preſent

Let hym of routhe lay to audyence
With doleful chere, and sobre countenaunce
To here thys man, by ful hye ſentence
Hys mortal wo, and hys perturbaunce
Complaynyng, nowe lyeng in a traunce
With lokes vpcast, and ruful chere
The ſecrete of whiche was as ye shal here.

The thought oppreſſed with inward sighes sore
The paynful syke, the body languiſhyng
The woful gost, ſ[illegible]herte rent and tore
The pytous chere pale in complaynyng
The deedly face, lyke asshes ſ[illegible]hynyng
The salte teares that from myn eyen fal
Perceyl declare, groundе of my paynes al

Whoſe herte is grounde to bleede in heuineſſe
The thought reſceyte of wo, & of complayne
The breſt is cheſt of dole and dreryneſſe
The body eke so feble and so fayne
With hote and colde myne aces is so mayne
That nowe I chyuer for defaute of heate
And hote as glede, nowe sodaynly I sweate

Nowe hote as fyre, nowe colde as asshes deed
Now hote for colde, nowe cold for hete again
Nowe colde as yse, nowe as coles reed
For hete I brenne, thus betwyxe twayne
I poſſeſſe am, and al for taſte in payne
So that my hete playnly as I trie
Of greuous colde is cauſe euery dele

This is the colde of inwarde hye diſdayne
Colde of dyſpyte, and colde of cruel hate
This is the colde ꝑ euer doth his beſt payne
Tyrell trouthe to fyght and debate
This is the colde that the fyre abate
Of trewe meaning, alas the harde whyle
Thys is the colde that wol me begyle

For euer the better that in trouth I mente
With al my myght faythfully to ſerue
With herte and al to be diligent
The leſſe thanke, alas I can deſerue
Thus for my trouth daunger doth me ſterue
For one that shuld my deth of mercy let
Hath made diſpite new his ſwerde to whet

Agaynſt me, and hys arowes to fyle
To take vengeaunce of wylful cruelte
And tonges falſe through her ſleyghtly wyle
Han gone a werre, that wyl not ſtynted be
And falſe enuye, wrathe and enuyte
Haue conſpired agaynſt al right and lawe
Of her malyce that trouth shalbe ſlawe.

And male bouche, gan firſt the tale tel
To ſclaunder trouth of indignacion

And

And falle reporte so loude range the bel
That myn vyleſe and falſe ſuſpection
Put trouthe vnto confuſion
So that alas, wrongfully he dyeth
And falſeneſſe nowe hys place occupyeth

And entred is in to trouthes londe
And hath therof the ful poſſeſſyon
O rightful god that firſt the trouthe fonde
Howe may thou ſuffre ſuche oppreſſyon
That falſhed ſhulde haue iuriſdiction
In trouthes ryght to ſlee hym gyltles
In his traunchyſe he may not lyue in pees

Falſly accuſed, and of hys ſoone forfuged
Without anſwere, whyle he was abſent
Be dampned was, and may not be excuſed
For cruelte fate in iugement
Of haſtyneſſe without admyſement
And badde Wisdayne do execute anone
Hys iugement in preſence of hys fone

Attourney maye none amytted bren
To excuſe trouthe, ne a worde to ſpeke
To fayth or othe the iuge lyſte not ſeen
There is no gayne, but he wyl be wreke
O lorde of trouthe to the I cal and crepe
Howe may thou ſe thus in thy preſence
Without mercy murdred innocence

Nowe god that art of trouthe ſouerayne
And ſeeſt howe I lye for trouthe bounde
No fore knytte in loues fyrye chayne
But at the derthe through gyte with many a wounde
That lykely are neuer for to ſounde
And for my trouth am dampned to the derthe
And not abyde, but drawe alonge the brerthe

Conſyder and ſe in thyne eternal ryght
Howe that myn herte profeſſed whilom was
For to be trewe with al my ful myght
Onely to one, the whiche nowe alas
Of volunte without any treſpas
Myne accuſours hath taken vnto grace
And cheriſheth hem, my derthe to purchace

What meneth thys, what is this wonder brere
Of purueyaunce yf I ſhal it cal
Of god of loue, that falſe hem ſo aſſure
And trewe alas, downe of the whele ben fal
And yet in ſothe, this is the worſt of al (me
That falſhed wrongfully of trouth hath put
And trouthe afrnwarde of falſhed bereth (the blame
Thys blynde chaunce, thys ſtormy auenture
In loue hath made hys experyence
For who that doth with trouth moſt his cure
Shal for his mede fynde moſte offence
That ſerueth loue with al hys dylygence
For who can fayne vnder lowlyhede
He fayleth not to fynde grace and ſpede

For I loued one, ful longe ſythe agone
With al myne herte, body and ful might
And to be deed my herte can not gone
From his beſte but holde that he hath hyght
Though I be banyſhed out of her ſyght
And by her mouthe dampned that I ſhal dey
Unto my beheſt, yet I wyl euer obey

For euer ſythe that the worlde began
Who ſo lyſte loke, and in ſtory rede
He ſhal aye finde that the trewe man
Was put abacke where as the falſhede
Yfurthered was, for loue taketh none hede
To ſee the trew, and hath of hem no charge
Where as the falſe gothe freely at her large

I take recorde of Palamydes
The trewe man, the noble worthy knyght
That euer loued, and of hys payne no reles
Notwithſtandinge his manhode & his might
Loue vnto hym dyd ful great vnright
For aye the bet he dyd in cheualrye
The more he was hyndred by enuye

And aye the better he dyd in euery place
Through hys knyghthode and buſy payne
The ferder was he from hys ladyes grace
For to her mercy myght he neuer attayne
And to his dethe he coude it not refrayne
For no daungere, but aye obey and ſerue
As he beſt coude, playnly tyl he ſterue

What was the fyne alſo of Hercules
For al hys conqueſt and hys worthyneſſe
That was of ſtrength alone peerles
For lyke as bokes of hym lyſte expreſſe
He ſet pylers through hys hye proweſſe
Away at Gades for to ſignifye
That no man might hym paſſe in cheualrye

The whiche pylers ferre beyonde Inde
He ſet of golde, for a remembraunce
And for al that was he ſet behynde
With hem that loue lyſte febly anaunce
For hym ſet laſt vpon a daunce

Againſt

Agaynst whom helpe may no fleyte
For al his trouth he lost his lyfe

Phebus also for al hys pleasaunt lyght
Whan that he went here in erthe lowe
Unto the herte with Uenus fyght
Ywounded was through Cupides bowe
And yet his lady lyst hym not to knowe
Though for her loue his herte dyd blede
She let hym go, and toke of him no hede

What shal I say of yonge Piramus
Of trewe Tristram, for al hys hye renowne
Of Achylles or of Antonius
Of Jreyte, or of hym Palamowne
What was the ende of her passyowne
But after sorowe deth, and than her graue
Lo here the guerdon that these louers haue

But false Jason with his doublenesse
That was untrewe at Colkos to Medee
And Theseus rote of unkyndenesse
And with these two eke the false Enee
Lo thus the false aye in one degre
Had in loue her lust and al her wyl
And saue falshode, there was none other skil

Of Thebes eke the false Jrcite
And Demephoon eke for hys slouthe
They had her lust & al that myght delite
For al her falshode and great untrouthe
Thus euer loue alas, and that is routhe
His false lieges forthereth what he may
And sleeth the trewe ungoodly day by day

For trewe Adon was slayne with the boze
Amidde the forest in the grene shade
For Uenus loue he felte al the sore
But Uulcanus with her no mercy made
The foule chorle had many nightes glade
Where Mars her knyght and her man
To finde mercy comforte none he can

Also the yonge freshe Ypomedes
So lusty fre as of hys corage
That for to serue with al his hert he ches
Athalans so fayre of her vysage
But loue alas quite him so his wage
With cruel daunger playnly at the laste
That with the deth guerdonelesse he paste

Lo here the fyne of loues seruyce
Lo howe that loue can his seruauntes quite
Lo howe he can his faythful men despise
To se the trewe men, and false to respyte
Lo howe he doth the swerde of sorowe byte
In hertes, suche as moste hys lust obey
To saue the false and do the trewe dey

For fayth nor trouthe, worde, ne assurance
Trewe meanyng, seruyse, or busynesse
Styl poyte, ne faythful attendaunce
Manhode ne might in armes worthynesse
Pursute of worthyp nor hye prowesse
In straunge lande riding ne trauayle
Ful litel or nought in loue doth auayle

Peryl of dethe, nor in see ne lande
Hunger ne thrust, sorowe ne sykernesse
Ne great emprises for to take on hande
Shedyng of bloode, nor manful hardinesse
Ne ofte woundyng at lances by distresse
Nor in parting of lyfe, nor dethe also
Al is for nought, loue taketh no hede therto

But lesynges with her flatterye
Through her falshede, & with her doublenesse
With tales newe, and many fayned lye
By false semblaunt & counterfet humblesse
Under colour depaynte with stedfastnesse
With fraude couered under a pyrous face
Accept be nowe rathest unto grace

And can hym selfe nowe best magnifye
With fayned poyte and presumpcyon
They traume her cause with false surquidrie
Under meaning of double entencyon
To thynke one in her opynyon
And saye another, to set hym selfe alofte
And hynder trouthe, as it is sene ful ofte

The whiche thynge, I bye nowe al to dere
Thanked be Uenus, and the god Cupyde
As it is sene be myne oppressed chere
And by hys arowes that sticken in my syde
That saue dethe, I nothinge abyde
Fro day to day, alas the harde whyle
When euer his darte that him lyste to smite

My wofull herte for to riue a two
For faute of mercy, and lacke of pyte
Of her that causeth al my payne and wo
And lyste not ones of grace for to se
Unto my trouthe through her cruelte
And most of al I me complayne
That she hath ioy to laughe at my payne

And

And wylfully hath my dethe ſworne
Al gylteleſſe, and wote no cauſe why
Saue for the trouthe that I had afore
To her alone to ſerue faythfully
O god of lone, vnto the I crye
And to thy blynde dowble deite
Of thys great wrong I complayne me

And vnto thy ſtormy wylful baryaunce
Yment with chaūge and great vnſtableneſſe
Now vp now downe, ſo rēning is thy chaūce
That the to truſt may be no ſykerneſſe
I wyte it nothynge but thy doubleneſſe
And who that is an archer and is blende
Marketh nothynge but ſhoteth by wende

And for that he hath no diſcrecyon
Without aduyſe he let hys arowe go
For lacke of ſyght, and alſo of reaſon
In his ſhotyng it happeth ofte ſo
To hurte hys frende rather than his fo
So doth this god with hys ſharpe ſtone
The trew ſleeth, and letteth the falſe gone

And of hys woundyng this is the worſt of al
Whan he hurteth doth to ſo cruel wretche
And maketh the ſycke for to crye and cal
Unto hys foe for to be hys leche,
And harde it is for a man to ſech
Upon the poynt of deth in ieoperdye
Unto hys foe to fynde remedye

Thus fareth it nowe euen by me
That to my foe that gaue myn hert a woūde
Mote aſke grace, mercy, and pyte
And namely there where none may be founde
For nowe my ſore my leche wyl confounde
And god of kynde ſo hath ſet myne bye
My lyues foe to haue my wounde in cure

Alas the whyle nowe that I was borne
Or that I euer ſawe the bryght ſonne
For nowe I ſe that ful longe afore
Or I was borne, my deſteny was ſponne
By Parcas ſyſterne to ſlee me yf they conne
For they my dethe ſhopen or my ſherte
Onely for trouth I may it not aſterte

The myghty goddeſſe alſo of nature
That vnder god hath the gouernaunce
Of worldely thynges cōmytted to her cure
Diſpoſed haue through her wyſe purueyaūce
To gyue my lady ſo muche ſuffyſaunce
Of al vertues, and therwithal purueyde
To murdre trouth, hath take daūger to gide

For bounte, beaute, ſhape, and femelyhede
Wyſdome, wit, paſſyngly fayreneſſe
Benigne porte, glad chere with lowlyhede
Of womanhede ryght plenteous largneſſe
Nature dyd in her fully empreſſe
Whā ſhe her wrought, & alther laſt diſdayne
To hinder trouthe, ſhe made her chāberlayne

Whan miſtruſt alſo, and falſe ſuſpection
With miſbeleue ſhe made for to be
Cheſe of counſayle to this concluſyon
For to exile trouthe, and eke pyte
Out of her courte to make mercy flee
So that diſpite now holdeth forth her reyne
Through haſty bileue of tales that mē feyne

And thus I am for my trouthe, alas
Murdred & ſlayn, with wordes ſharpe & kene
Gyteleſſe god wote of al treſpas
And lye and blede vpon thys colde grene
Nowe mercy ſwete, mercy my lyues quene
And to your grace of mercye yet I preye
In your ſeruyce that your man may deye

But if ſo be that I ſhal dye algate
And that I ſhal none other mercy haue
Yet of my dethe let thys ben the date
That by youre wyll I was brought to my grave
Or haſtely, yf that you lyſte me ſaue
My ſharpe woundes that ake ſo and blede
Of mercy charme, and alſo of womanhede

For other charme playnly is there none
But onely mercy, to helpe in thys caſe
For though my woundes blede euer in one
My lyfe, my deth, ſtandeth in your grace
And though my gylte be nothynge, alas
I aſke mercy in al my beſt entente
Redy to dye, if that ye aſſente

For there agaynſt ſhal I neuer ſtryue
In worde ne werke, playnly I ne may
For leuer I haue than to be alyue
To dye ſothly, and it be to her paye
Yet though it be thys ſame day
Or whan that euer her lyſte to deuyſe
Suffiſeth me to dye in your ſeruyſe

And god that knoweſt the thought of euery wight
Ryght as it is, in euery thyng thou mayſt ſe

Yet

Yet er I dye, with al my ful might
Lowly I pray to graunt vnto me
That ye goodly, fayre, freshe and fre
Whiche onely ser me for defaute of trothe
Or that I dye, ye may knowe my trothe

For that in sothe suffyseth me
And she it knowe in every circumstaunce
And after I am wel payde that she
Of that her lyst of dethe to do vengeaunce
Vnto me that am vnder her lygeaunce
It sytte me not her dome to disobeye
But at her iuste wylfully to deye

Without grutchynge or rebellyon
In wyl or worde, holy I assente
Or any maner contradiction
Fully to be at her commaundement
And if I dye, in my testament
My herte I sende, and my spirite also
What so euer she lyste with hem to do

And alder last to her womanhede
And to her mercy, me I recommaunde
That lye nowe here bytwyxe hope and drede
Abidinge playnly what she lyst commaunde
For vtterly thys nis no demaunde
Welcome to me while me lasteth brethe
Right at her choyse where it be lyfe or dethe

In this mater more what might I sayne
Sithe in her hande, and in her wyl is al
Bothe lyfe and deth, my ioy and al my payne
And fynally my herte holde I shal
Tyl my spirite by destenye fatal
Whan that her lyste fro my body wende
Haue here my trouth, & thus I make an ende

And with that worde he gan syghe as sore
Lyke as his hert ryue wolde atwayne
And helde hys peace, & spake no worde more
But for to se his wo and mortal payne
The teres gonne fro myne eyen rayne
Ful pyteously for very inwarde rothe
That I hym sawe, so long wilhing for trothe

And al this while my selfe I kepte close
Amonge the bowes, and my selfe gonne hyde
Tyl at the last the wofull man arose
And to a lodge went there beside
Where al the day, his custome was tabyde
Alone to complayne of his paynes kene
Thus pere to pere vnder the bowes grene

And for because that it drewe to the nyght
And that the sonne his arke diurnal
Ypassed was, so that his persaunt lyght
Hys bright beames and hys stremes al
Were in the waues of the water sal
Vnder the boxdure of our occian
Hys chare of gold, hys course so swiftly ran

And whyle the twylight and the rowes rede
Of Phebus lyght were beautes alyte
I penne I toke, and gan me fast spede
The wofull playnte of thys man to wryte
Worde by worde as he dyd endyte
Like as I herde and coude hym tho repeate
I haue here set, your hertes to dispeate

If ought be misse, lay the wyte on me
For I am worthy for to beare the blame
Yf any thynge mysse reported be
To make thys dytte for to seme lame (same
Through myne dyschyning, but for to sayn the
Lyke as this man his complaynt dyd expresse
I aske mercy and forgyuenesse

And as I wrote, me thought I sawe a ferre
Ferre in the west lustely appere
Esperus the goodly bryght sterre
So glade, so fayre, so persaunte eke of chere
I meane Venus with her beames clere
That beu[illegible]tres onely to relene
Is wonte of custome for to shewe at eue

And I as fast fel adowne on my kne
And euen thus to her gan I to prey
O lady Venus so fayre vpon to se
Let not thys man for his trouthe deye
For that ioy thou haddest whan thou leye
With Mars thy knight, whē Vulcanus fōde
And with a chayne inuisible you bonde

Togyder bothe twayne in the same whyle
That al the courte above celestial
At your shame gan laughe and smyle
Ah, fayre lady wyfly fonde at al
Comforte to careful, o goddes immortal
Be helpyng nowe, and do thy diligence
To let the stremes of thyne influence

Destrude downe, in forthering of the trouth
Namely of hem that lye in sorowe bounde
Shewe nowe thy myght & on her wo haue routh
Er falsse daunger slee hem and confounde
And specially let thy might be [illegible]

For

For to so couer what so that thou may
The trewe man that in the herbet lay

And al trewe fozther foz hys sake
O glad sterre, o lady Venus myne
And cause his lady him to grace take
Her hert of stele to mercy so enclyne
Er that thy beme go vp to declyne
And er that thou nowe go fro vs adowne
For that loue thou haddest to Idowne

And whan she was gone to her rest
I rose anone, and home to bed wente
For werry me thought it for the best
Praying thus in al my best entente
That al trewe, that be with daunger shente
With mercy may in t' ease of her payne
Recured be, er Maye come efte agayne

And for that I ne may no lenger wake
Farewel ye louers al that be trewe
Praying to god, and thus my leue I take
That er the sonne to morowe be risen newe
And er he haue ayen rosen he we
That eche of you may haue suche a grace
His owne lady in armes to embrace

I meane thus, in al honeste
Without more ye may togyder sporte
And so ye lyst at good lybertie
That eche may to other her hert breke
On Jalousyes onely to be wreke
That hath so long of his malyce and enuy
Werred Trouth with his tyranny.

¶ Lenuoye.

¶ Princesse pleaseth it to your benygnyte
This lytel dyte to haue in mynde
Of womanhode also for to se
Your man may your mercy fynde
And pyte eke, that longe hath be behynde
Let hym agayne be prouoked to grace
For by my trouthe it is agaynst kynde
False Daungere to occupye his place

Go lytel quayre vnto my lyues quene
And my very hertes souerayne
And be right glad, for she shal the sene
Suche is thy grace, but I alas in payne
Im lefte behynde, & not to whom to playne
For mercy, ruthe, grace, and eke pyte
Exiled be, that I may not attayne
Recure to fynde of myne auentyte.

¶ Explicit.

¶ A prayse of women.

ALthoȳ lyste of women euyll to speke
And sayne of hem worse than they deserue
I praye to god that her neckes to breke
Or on some euyl deth mote tho iāgiers sterue
For euery man were holden hem to serue
And do hem worshyp, honour, and seruise
In euery maner that they best coude deuyse

For we ought first to thinke on what manere
They brig vs forth, & what pain they endure
First in our byrth, and syth fro yere to yere
Howe busely they done theyr busy cure
To kepe vs fro euery mysauenture
In our youth whan we haue no myght
Our selfe to kepe, neyther by day nor nyght

Alas, howe may we say on hem but wele
Of whom we were fostred and yborne
And ben al our socoure, & euer trewe as stele
And for our sake ful ofte they suffre sore
Without women were al our ioye lore
Wherfore we ought al women to obey
In al goodnesse, I can no more say

This is wel knowen, and hath ben or this
That women ben cause of al lyghtnesse
Of knyghthode, norture, eschewyng al mals
Encrease of worshyp, and of al worthynesse
Therto curteys & meke, & grounde of al good
Glad & merry, & trewe in euery wyse (nesse
That any gentyl hert can thynke or deuyse

And though any wold trust to your untruthe
And to your fayre wordes wold aught assent
In good faith me thinketh it were grete ruthe
That other women shold for her gylt be shent
That neuer knewe ne wyst worse of her entente
Ne lyst not to here the sayne wordes ye wytte
Which ye you payne fro day to day endyte

But who may be ware of your fales untrewe
That ye so busyly payne and endyte,
For ye wyl swere that ye neuer knewe
Ne sawe the woman, neyther moche ne lyte

Some onely her to whom ye had delyte
As lyst to serue of all that euer ye sey
And for her loue must ye nedes dey

Thꝰ wil ye swere that ye knewe neuer before
What loue was ne his dredful obseruaunce
But nowe ye fele that he can wounde sore
Wherfore ye put you in to her gouernaunce
Whō loue hath ordeyned you to serue & do plesaunce
To al your myzt your lyttel lyues space
Whiche endeth sone, but if she do you grace

And than to bedde wyl ye soone drawe
And sone sycke ye wyl you than fayne
And swere fast your lady hath you slawe
And brought you sodeynly in so high a payn
That fro your deth may no man you restrayn
With a daungerous loke of her eyen two
That to your bethe must ye nedes go

Thus wil ye morne, thus wyl ye sighe sore
As though your herte anon in two wold brest
And swere fast that ye may lyue no more
Myne owne lady, that myght if ye lest
Bringe myne herte sondrie in to rest
As if you lyst mercy on me to haue
Thus your vntrouth wyl euer mercy craue

Thus wol ye playne, tho ye nothyng smerte
These innocent creatures for to begyle
And swere to hem, so wounded is your herte
For her loue, that ye may lyue no while
Scarsly so longe as one might go a myle
Sobyrth bethe, to bringe you to an ende
But if your souerayn lady lyst you to amende

And if for routhe she cōforte you in any wyse
For pyte of your false othes sere
So that innocēt weneth þ it be as you deuise
And weneth your herte be as she may here
Thus for to cōfort, & somwhat do you chere
Than wol these iangleres deme of her ful yl
And sayne that ye haue her fully at your wyll

Lo howe redy her tonges ben, and prest
To speke harme of women causelesse
Alas, why myght ye not as wel say the best
As for to deme hem thus gyltelesse
In your herte ywis there is no gentylnesse
That of your own gylt, lyst thus womē fame
Sclaundre by any trouth, ne thinke ye be to blame

For of women cometh this worldly wele
Wherfore we ought to worshyp hē euermore
And though it mishap one, we ought for to hele
For it is all through our false lore
That day and night, we payne vs euermore
With many an othe, these women to begyle
With false tales, and many a wycked wyle

And if falsheede shulde be reckened & tolde
In women, twys so trouthy were
Not as in men, by a thousande folde
Fro all vyces ywis they stande clere
In any thyng that euer I conde of here
But if entisyng of these men it make
That hem to flatteren commen neuer slake.

I wold fayne wete wher euer ye coude here
Without mercy crying, what womē did amis
For ther ye may get hē, ye lye fro yere to yere
And many a gabbyng ye make to hem ywis
For I conde neuer here, ne knowen er this
Where euer ye conde fynde in any place
That euer women besought you of grace

There ye you payne, with al your ful might
With all your herte, and all your besynesse
To pleasen hem, bothe by day and night
Prayng hem of her grace and gentrynesse
To haue pyte vpon your great distresse
And þ they wolde on your payne haue routhe
And slee you not, sens ye meane but trouthe

Thus may ye se that they ben fauteles
And innocent to all your werkes slye
And all your crafte that touche falsnesse
They knowe hem not, ne may hem not espye
So sweare ye that ye must nedes dye
But if they wolde of her womanheed
Upon you rewe, er that ye be deed

And than your lady, and your hertes quene
Ye cal hem, and therwith ye sighe sore
And say, my lady I trowe that it be sene
In what plyte that I haue lyued ful yore
But nowe I hope that ye woll no more
In these paynes suffre me for to dwell
For of all goodnesse, ywys ye be the well

Lo whyche a paynted processe can ye make
These harmlesse creatures for to begyle
And whan they slepe, ye payne you to wake
And to bethynke you on many a wicked wyle
But ye shal se the day þ ye shal curse þ whyle
That ye so besyly dyd your entent

Hem

yem to begyle, that falshede neuer ment

For thys ye knowe well, though I wolde lye
In women is al trouthe and stedfastnesse
For in good faythe, I neuer of hem sye
But worthe worshyp, bounte, and gentylnesse
Right cõmyng, fayre, and full of mekenesse
Good and glad, and lowly I you ensure
Is thys goodly angelyke creature

And yf it happe a man be in distresse
She dothe her busynesse, and her ful payne
With all her might, him to comforte & plesse
If fro his disease she might him restrayne
In worde ne dede twoys she wol not fayne
But with al her might, she doth her besynesse
To bringe him out of Iheuynesse

Lo what gentylesse these women haue
Yf we coude knowe it for our rudenesse
How besy they be vs to kepe and saue
Both in heale, and also in syckenesse
And alway right forth for our distresse
In euery maner, thus shewe they trouthe
That in hem is all goodnesse and trouthe

And syth we fynde in hem gẽtylnesse & trouth
Worthyp, bounte, and kyndenesse euermore
Let neuer this gẽtillesse, through your slouth
In her kynde trouthe be aught forfore
That in women is, and hath ben ful yore
For in reuerence of the heauens quene
We ought to worthip al women that bene

For of al creatures that euer were get & borne
This wote ye wel, a woman was the best
By her was recouered þ blys þ we had lorne
And through þ woman shal we come to rest
And ben ysaued, yf that our strife lest
Wherfore me thynketh, if that we had grace
We oughten honour women in euery place

Therfore I rede, that to our lyues ende
Fro this time forth, while that we haue space
That we haue trespaced, pursue to amende
Praying our lady, well of all grace
To bringe vs vnto that blysful place
There as the & al good wome shal be in fere
In heuen above, amonge the angels clere.

Explicit.

The houle of Fame

God tourne vs euery dreme to good
For it is wonder thing by the rood
To my witte, what causeth sweuenes
On the morowe or on euenes
And why the effecte folowerth of some
And of some it shall neuer come
Why that it is an auysion
And why this a reuelacion
Why this a dreme, why that a sweuen
And nat to euery man lyche euen
Why this a fantome, why that oracles
I not: but who so of these myracles
The causes knowe bet than I
Defyne he, for I certainly
Ne can hem nat, ne neuer thinke
To busy my wytte for to swynke
To knowe of her significations
The gendres, ne diffynctions
Of the tynes of hem, ne the causes
Or why this is more than that is
Or yeue folkes complexions
Make hem dreme of reflexions
Or els thus, as other sayne
For the great febleneste of her brayne
By abstynence, or by sycknesse
Poison, strife, or great distresse
Or els by disordynaunce (:)
Or natural accustomaunce
That some men be so curyous
In study, or melancolyous
Or thus: so inly ful of dreve (:)
That no man may him bote rede
Or els that deuocion
Of some, and contemplacyon
Causen suche dremes ofte
Or that the cruel lyfe vnsofte
Of hem that loues leden (:)(:)
Ofte hopen muche or dreden
That purely her impressions
Causen hem to haue bysyons
Or if spirites han the myght
To make folke to dreme on myght
Or if the soule of proper kynde
Be so perfyte as men fynde

That it wote what is to come
And that he warneth all and some
Of euerych of her auentures
By auisyons, or by fygures
But that our flesshe hath no myght
To vnderstande it a ryght
For it is warned to derkely
But why the cause is, not wote I
Wel wo the of this chyng clerkes
That treaten of that, and of other werkes
For I of none opynion
Nyl as nowe make mencion
But onely that the holy Rood
Tourne vs euery dreme to good
For neuer sythe I was borne
Ne no man elis me before
Hette I trowe stedfastly
So wonderful a dreme as I.
The tenth day nowe of Decembre
The whiche, as I can remembre
I wol you tellen euery dele
But at my begynnyng trusteth wele
I wol make inuocacion
With a deuoute special deuocion
Unto the god of slepe anone
That dwelleth in a caue of stone
Upon a streme that cometh fro Lete
That is a flode of hel vnswete
Beside a fulke, that men clepe Cymery
There slepeth aye this god vnmery
With his slepy thoufande sonnis
That alway to slepe her won is
And to this god that I of rede
Praye I, that he wol me spede
My sweuen for to tel a ryght
If euery dreme stande in his myght
And he that mouer is of all
That is and was, and euer shall
So gyue hem ioye that it here
Or all that they dreme to yere
And for to stande al in grace
Of her loues, or in what place
That hem were leueft for to stonde
And sheide hem from pouerte and shonde
And from euery vnhappe and diseafe
And sende hem that may hem pleafe
That taketh wel and scorneth nought
Ne it mis deme in her thought
Through malycious entencion
And who so through presumpcion
Or hate or enuye, or through enuy
Bekyrte or lape, or felony
Misdeme it, pray I Jesus good
Dreme he barefote or dreme he shood
That euery harme that any man
Hath had sythe the worlde began
Befal hym therof or he sterue
And graunt that he may it deserue
Lo, wyth ryght suche a conclusyon
As had of hys auisyon
Creseus, that was kyng of Lyde
That hygh vpon a gybet byde
Thys prayer shall he haue of me
I am no bette in charyte.

NOwe herken, as I haue you sayde
What that I mette or I abrayde
Of Decembre the tenthe day
Whan it was nyght, to slepe I lay
Ryght as I was wonte to doone
And fyl a slepe wonder soone
As he that was wery forgo
On pylgrimage myles two
To the corps of saynt Leonarde
To maken lythe, that eese was harde
But as I slepte me mette I was
Within a temple ymade of glas
In whiche there were mo ymages
Of golde, standyng in sondry stages
In mo riche tabernacles
And with perre mo pynnacles
And mo curyous portratures
And queynt maner of fygures
Of golde worke, than I sawe euer
But certaynly I nyst neuer
Where that it was, but well wyst I
It was of Uenus redely
This temple, for in purtreture
I sawe anon right her fygure
Naked fletyng in a see
And also on her heed parde
Her rose garlande whyte and rede
And her combe to kembe her hede
Her doues, and dan Cupido
Her blynde sonne, and Uulcano
That in his face was ful browne
But as I romed vp and downe
I founde that on the wal there was
Thus writen on a table of bras
I wol nowe synge if that I can
The armes, and also the man
That first came through hys destyne
Fugityfe fro Troye the countre
Into Italye, wyth ful moche pyne
Unto the strondes of Lauyne
And tho began the storie anone

As I shal tellen you echone
First sawe I the distruction
Of Troye, through the grete Synon
With his false untrewe forswerynges
And with his chere and his lesynges
Made a horse, brought in to Troy
By whiche Troyans loste al her joy
And after this was graued, alas
Howe Ilyons castell assayled was
And won, and kyng Priamus slayne
And Polytes his sonne certayne
Dispytously of dan pyrrus
And next that sawe I howe Venus
Whan that she sawe the castel brende
Downe from heuen she gan discende
And bade her sonne Eneas to flye
And howe he fledde, and howe that he
Escaped was from all the prees
And toke his father, olde Anchyses
And bare hym on his backe away
Cryeng alas and welaway
The which Anchises in his hande
Bare tho the goddes of the lande
Thylke that vnbrenned were
Than sawe I next al in fere
Howe Crusa, dan Eneas wyfe
Whom that he loued al his lyfe
And her yonge sonne Julo
And eke Iskanyus also
Fledden eke, with drery chere
That it was pyte for to here
And in a forest as they went
At a tournynge of a went
Howe Crusa was loste, alas
That rede nat I, howe that it was
Howe he her sought, and howe her golte
Bad hym flye the grekes hoste
And sayd he must in to Italye
As was his destyne, sauns faylle
That it was pyte for to here
Whan her spyrite gan appere
The wordes that she to him sayde
And for to kepe her sonne him prayde
There sawe I grauen eke howe he
His father eke, and his meyne
With his shyppes gan to sayle
Towarde the countre of Italye
As streyght as they myghten go
There sawe I eke the cruel Juno
That ante dan Jupyters wyfe
That hath yhated al thy lyfe
Al the Troyan bloode
Ren and crye as thou were woode
On Eolus, the god of wyndes
To blowen out of al kyndes
So loude, that he shulde drenche
Lorde, lady, grome, and wenche
Of al the Troyans nacion
Without any of her sauacion
There sawe I sache tempest aryse
That euery herte myght agryse
To se it paynted on the wal
There sawe I eke grauen with al
Venus, howe ye my lady dere
Weyyng with ful wofull chere
Prayeng Jupiter on hye
To saue and kepe that nauye
Of that Trogian Eneas
Sythe that he her sonne was
There sawe I Joues Venus kysse
And graunted was of the tempest lysse
There sawe I howe the tempest stente
And howe with all pyne he wente
And priuely toke a ryuage
Into the countre of Cartage
And on the morowe how that he
And a knyght that heyght Achate
Metten with Venus that day
Goyng in a queynte aray
As she had be an hunteresse
With wynde blowyng vpon her tresse
And how Eneas began to playne
Whan he knewe her of his payne
And how his shyppes drent were
Or els ylost, he nyst where
How she gan him comforte tho
And bade him to Cartage go
And there he shuld his folke fynde
That in the see were lefte behynde
And shortely of this thyng to pace
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dydo, quene of that countre
That shortly for to tellen she
Became his loue, and let hym do
Al that weddyng longeth to
What shuld I speke it more quaynte
Or payne me my wordes to payne
To speake of loue, it wol not be
I canne not of that faculte
And eke to tellen of the maniere
Howe they first acquaynted were
It were a longe processe to tell
And ouer longe for you to dwell
There sawe I graue howe Eneas
Tolde to Dydo euery caas
That hym was rydde vpon the see

And eſte grauen was howe that ſhe
Made of him ſhortly at a worde
Her lyfe, her loue, her lufe, her lorde
And dyd to hym al reuerence
And layde on him al the diſpence
That any woman myght do
Wenyng it had all be ſo
As he her ſwore, and hereby demed
That he was good, for he ſuche ſemed
Alas what harme doth apparence
Whan it is falſe in exiſtence
For he to her a traytour was
Wherfore ſhe ſlowe her ſelfe alas
Lo, howe a woman doth amys
To loue him that vnknowen is
For by Chriſt, lo thus it fareth
It is not al golde that glareth
For alſo broube I wel myne heed
There may be vnder goodlyheed,
Couered many a ſhrewde vyce
Therfore be no wight ſo nyce
To take a loue onely for chere
Or ſpeche or for frendly manere
For this ſhal euery woman fynde
That ſome man of his pure kynde
Wol ſhewen outwarde the fayreſt
Tyl he haue caught that what him leſt
And than wol he cauſes fynde
And ſwere how ſhe is vnkynde
Or falſe or priuy, or double was
Al this ſay I by Eneas
And Dydo, and her nyce leſt
That loued al to ſoone a geſt
Wherfore I wol ſay o prouerbe
That he that fully knoweth the herbe
May ſafely laye it to his eye
Withouten drede this is no lye
But let vs ſpeke of Eneas
Howe he betrayed her, alas
And lefte her ful vnkyndely
So whan ſhe ſawe al vtterly
That he wolde her of trouth fayle
And wenden from her in to Itayle
She gan to wringe her handes two
Alas (quod ſhe) that me is wo
Alas, is euery man thus trewe
That euery yere wol haue a newe
If it ſo longe tyme endure
Or elis thre paraunenture
And thus of one he wol haue fame
In magnifieng of his owne name
Another for frendſhyp ſayth he
And yet there ſhal the thirde be
That is taken for delyte
Lo, or elis for ſynguler profyte
In ſuche wordes gan complayne
Dydo of her great payne
As me mette dremyng redyly
None other authour alege wol I
Alas (quod ſhe) I ſwete herte
Haue pyte on my ſorowes ſmerte
And flee me nat, go nat a[way]
O woful Dydo, welaway
(Quod ſhe) vnto her ſelfe tho
O Eneas what wol ye do
O that your loue ne your bonde
That ye ſwore with your right honde
Ne my cruel deth (quod ſhe)
May holde you ſtyll here with me
O, haue ye of my deth no pyte
Iwys myne owne dere herte ye
Knowe ful wel that neuer yet
As farre as euer I had wyt
Agylte you, in thought ne in dede
O, haue ye men ſuche goodlyhede
In ſpeche, and neuer a dele of trouthe
Alas that euer had couthe
Any woman on a falſe man
Now I ſe wel, and tel can
We wretched women can no arte
For certayne, for the more parte
Thus we ben ſerued euerychone
How ſore ſoeuer ye men can grone
Anon as we haue you receyued
Certaynely we ben diſceyued
For thoughe your loue laſt a ſeaſon
Wayte vpon the concluſyon
And eke howe ye determyne
And for the more parte defyne
O welaway that I was borne
For through you my name is lorne
And myne actes redde and ſonge
Ouer al this lande in euery tonge
O wycked fame, for there nys
Nothyng ſo ſwyfte lo as ſhe is
O ſothe is, euery thyng is wyſt
Though it be couerde with the myſt
Eke though I myght duren euer
That I haue done recouer I neuer
That it ne ſhal be ſayd, alas
I ſhamed was through Eneas
And that I ſhal thus lugged be
Lo right as ſhe hath done, nowe ſhe
Wol done eſtrefones hardely
Thus ſay the people priuely

But that is done nis not to done
But al her complaynt ne her mone
Certayne auayled her not a stre
And whan she wyst sothely, he
was forth in to hys shyppe agone
She in to chambre went anone
And called on her suster Anne
And gan her to complayne thanne
And sayd, that the cause was
That she first loued him, alas
And first counsayled her therto
But what, whan this was sayd and do
She roste her seluen to the herte
And deyde through the woundes smerte
But al the maner howe she deyde
And al the wordes howe she seyde
who so to knowe it hath purpose
Rede Virgile in Eneydos
Or the pistels of Ouide
what that she wrote, or that she dyd
And nere it to longe to endite
By god I wolde it here write
But welaway, the harme and routhe
That hath betyde for suche vntrouthe
As men may ofte in bokes rede
And alday seme it yet in dede
That for to thynken it trewe is
Lo Demophon, duke of Athenys
Howe he forswore hym falsely,
And trayed Phillis wickedly
That kynges doughter was of Thrace
And falsely gan his terme pace
And whan she wyst that he was false
She honge her selfe right by the halse
For he had done her suche vntrouthe
Lo, was not this a wo and routhe
Eke loke howe false and recheles
Was to Briseyda Achilles
And Paris to Oenone
And Jason to Hipsiphile
And efte Jason to Medea
And Hercules to Dyanira
For he lefte her for Jole
That made hym take hys dethe parde
Howe false was eke Theseus
That as the story telleth vs
Howe he betrayed Adriane
The dyuel be hys soules bane
For had he laughed or youred
He muste haue ben al deuoured
If Adriane ne had be
And for the had of hym pyte
She made hym fro the deth escape
And he made her a ful false iape
For after this within a whyle
He lefte her sleppynge in an yle
Deserte alone right in the see
And stale away and let her be
And toke her suster Phedra tho
With hym, and gan to shyppe go
And yet he had swore to here
On al that euer he coude swere
That so she saued hym hys lyfe
He wolde taken her to hys wyfe
For she desired nothynge elles
In certayne, as the boke vs telles
But for to excuse this Eneas
Fullyche of al his great trespas
The boke sayeth sauns fayle
The goddes bade hym go to Itayle
And leauen Affriques regyoun
And fayre Dido and her towne
Tho sawe I graue howe to Itayle
Dan Eneas gan for to sayle
And howe the tempest al began
And howe he loste hys stereſman
Whiche that the sterne, or he toke kepe
Smote ouer the borde as he slepe
And also sawgh I howe Sibile
And Eneas beſyde an yle
To hel wente for to se
Hys father Anchyses the fre
And howe he there founde Palimurus
And also Dido, and Deiphebus
And euerych tourment eke in hel
Sawe he, whiche longe is for to tel
Whiche paynes who so lyste knowe
He muste rede many a rowe
In Vergyle or in Claudian
Or Dante, that it tellen can
Tho sawe I eke al the atiuayle
That Eneas had made in Itayle
And with kynge Latyn hys trete
And al the batayles that he
was at hym selfe, and hys knyghtes
Or he had al ywonne hys ryghtes
And howe he Turnus refte hys lyfe
And wan Lauina to hys wyfe
And al the meruey lous signals
Of the goddes celestials
Howe maugre Juno, Eneas
For al her sleyghe and her compas
Atcheued al hys auenture
For Jupiter toke on hym cure
At the prayer of Venus
Whiche I praye alway saue vs

And by aye, of our forowes lyght
Whan I had sene al thys syght
In this noble temple thus
Hey lorde thought I, that madest bs
Yet sawe I neuer suche noblesse
Of ymages, nor suche rychesse
As I se grauen in thys church
But nought wote I who dyd hem worche
Ne where I am, ne in what countre
But nowe wyll I out gone and se
Ryght at the wycket yf I can
Sene ought where stervnge any man
That may me tellen where I am
Whan I out of the dore cam
I faste abonte me beholde
Than sawe I but a large felde
As farre as euer I myght se
Without towne, house, or tre
Or busshe, or grasse, or eared lande
For al the felde was but of sande
As smal as men maye se at eye
In the desert of Lybye
Ne no maner creature
That is yformed by nature
Ne sawe I, me to rede or wysche
O Chryst thought I, that are in blysse
From fantom and illusyoun
Me saue, and with deuocyoun
Myne eyen to the heuen I caste
Tho was I ware, lo at the laste
That faste by the sonne on hye
As kenne myght I with myne eye
Me thought I sawe an Egle sore
But that it semed moche more
Than I had anye Egle yseyne
This is as sothe as dethe certeyne
It was of golde and shone so bryght
That neuer sawe men suche a syght
But yf the tresen had ywonne
Al newe of god another sonne
So shone the Egles fethers bryght
And somwhat downwarde gan it lyght.

Explicit liber primus.

Nowe herken euerye manner man
That Englysshe vnder stande can
And lysteth of my dreme to here
For now at erst shal ye here
So sely and so dredeful a vysyon
That I saye neyther Scipyon
Ne kynge Nabugodonosor
Pharao, Turnus, ne Alcanor
Ne metten suche a dreme as this
Nowe fayre blyssful, O Cypris
So be my fauour at thys tyme
That ye me rendyre and ryme (r)
Helpeth, that in Hermalo dwel
Besyde Elycon the clere wel
O thought, that wrote al that I met
And in the tresorie it set
Of my bisyne, nowe shal men se
If any vertue in the be (r)
To rei al my dremes aryght
Nowe ayde thy engyn and thy myght
This Egle of whiche I haue you tolde
That with fethers shone al of golde
Whiche that so hye gan to sore
I gan beholde more and more
To sene her beaute and the wonder
But neuer was that deute of thonder
Ne that thynge that men cal soudre
That smyte somtyme a toure to poudre
And in his swyfte commynge brende
That so swythe gan downwarde discende
As this foule whan it beheld
That I a rowme was in the felde
And with his grym pawes stronge
Within hys sharpe nayles longe
Me fyreng at a swappe he hente
And with hys soure agayne up wente
Me caryeng in hys clawes starke
As lyghtly as I had ben a larke
Howe hye I can not tellen yowe
For I came vp, I nyst neuer howe
For so astonyed and aswoned
Was euery vertue in me beued
What with his soure and my dred
That al my felynge gan to bed
For why, it was a great affraye (r)
Thus I longe in hys clawes laye
Tyl at last he to me spake
In mannes voyce, and sayd awake
And be not agast so for shame
And called me tho by my name
And for I shulde better abrayde
Me to awake, thus he sayde
Ryght in the same voyce and steuyn
That vsith one that I can neuyn
And with that voyce sothe to sayne
My mynde came to me agayne
For it was goodly sayde to me
So nas it neuer wonte to be
And here withal I gan to stere

As he me in hys fete bere
Tyl that he felte that I had heate
And felte eke tho myne heartte beate
And tho gan he me to dispozte
And with gentel wozdes me comfozte
And sayd twyse, saynt Mary
Thou artte a noyous thynge to cary
And nothynge nederh it perde
Foz also wyse god helpe me
As thou no harme shalte haue of this
And thys ease that betydde the is
Is foz thy loze and foz thy pzowe
Lette se, darst thou loke yet nowe
Be ful ensured boldely
I am thy frende, and therwith I
Gan foz to wonder in my mynde
O god (quod I) that madest al kynde
Shal I none otherwyse dye
Whedet Joue wyl me stellyfye
Oz what thyng maye this signifye
I am neither Ennocke ne Helye
Ne Romulus, ne Ganemede
That were boze bp as men rede
To heuen with dan Jupiter
And made the goddes boteler
Lo, this was tho my fantasye
But he that bare gan aspye
That I so thought and sayd thys
Thou demist of thy selfe amys
Foz Joue is not there aboute
I dare the put ful out of doute
To make of the yet a sterre
But er I beare the muche ferre
I wyl the tel what I am
And whider thou shalte, and why I came
To do this, so that thou take
Good heartte, and not foz feare quake
Gladly (quod I) nowe wel (quod he)
Fiest, I that in my fete haue the
Of whom thou haste feare and wonder
I am dwellynge with the god of thonder
Whiche men callen Jupiter
That doth me flyen ful ofte fer
To do all hys commaundement
And foz thys cause he hath me sent
To the: Herke nowe by thy trouthe
Certayne he hath of the routhe
That thou haste so truely
Longe serued entierely
Hys blynde newe Cupido
And sayze Venus also
Without guerdon euer yet
And nethetes hast set thy wyt
Although in thy heed ful lytel is
To make bokes, songes, and dites
In ryme, oz els in Cadence
As thou best canst in reuerence
Of loue, and of hys seruauntes eke
That haue his seruyce sought, and seke
And paynest the to pzayse hys arte
Although thou haddest neuer parte
Wherfoze also god me blesse
Jouis halte it great humblesse
And vertue eke, that thou wylte make
A nyght ful ofte thyne heed to ake
In thy studye so thou wzytest
And euer moze of loue endytest
In honour of hym and pzayszynges
And in hys folkes fourtherynges
And in her mater al deuysest
And not hym ne hys folke despisest
Although thou mayste go in the daunce
Of hem, that hym lyst not auaunce
Wherfoze as I sayde ywys
Jupiter conssydzeth wel thys
And also beausyze, of other thynges
That is, thou haste no tydynges
Of loues folke if they be glade
Ne of nothynge els that god made
And not onely fro ferre countre
That no tydynges comen to the
Not of thy very neyghbours
That dwellen almost at thy dozes
Thou herest neyther that ne thys
Foz whan thy labour al done is
And haste made al thy rechenynges
In stede of reste and of newe thynges
Thou goest home to thyne house anons
And also dombe as a stone
Thou sittest at another boke
Tyl fully dased is thy loke
And lyuest thus as an hermyte
Although thyne abstynence is lyte
And therfoze Jouis, throughe hys grace
Wyl that I beare thee to a place
Whiche that hyght the house of Fame
And to do the spozte and game
In some recompensacioun
Of thy labour and deuocyoun
That thou haste hadde, to counteruayle
To God Cupido the trechele
And thus thys God throughe hys mercyes
Wyl with some maner thyng the quyte
So that thou wylte be of good chere
Foz trust wel that thou shalte here
Whan we ben comen there as I say

No wonder thynges dare I lay
And of loues folke mo rydynges
Bothe sothsawes and lesynges
And mo loues newe begon
And longe serued ryl loue is won
And mo louers cashelly
That ben betyde, no man wote why
But as a blynde man starteth an Hare
And moze iolyte and welfare
While they fynde loue of stele
As thinke men, and ouer al wele
Mo discordes and mo ialousies
Mo murmures, and mo nouelries
And also mo dissimulacyons
And eke feyned reperacyons
And mo berdes in two houres
Without rasour oz syssoures
Ymade, than graynes be of landes
And eke mo holdynge in mo handes
And also mo renouelaunces
Of olde forleten aqueyntaunces
Mo loue dayes, and mo accordes
Than on instrumentes ben cordes
And eke of loue mo exchaunges
Than euer corne were in graunges
Unneth mayst thou trowen this
(Quod he) no so helpe me god as wys
(Quod I) No why (quod he) for it
Were impossible to my wyt
Though Fame had al the pyes
In al a realme and al aspyes
Howe that yer he shulde here al this
Oz they espyen, O yes yes
(Quod he) to me, that can I pleue
By reason, worthy for to leue
So that thou gyue thyn aduertence
To understande my sentence
First shal thou here where she dwelleth
Right so as thyn owne boke telleth
Her palays standeth as I shal say
Right euen a myddes of the way
Betwene heuen, erthe, and see
That what so euer in al these thre
Is spoken in pryue oz apperte
The way therto is so ouerte
And stante eke in so syngler a place
That euery sowne mote to it pace
Oz what so cometh from anye tonge
Be rowned, redde, oz songe
Oz spoken in swerte oz derde
Certayne it mote thyder nede
Nowe herken wel, for why I wyl
Tellen the a proper skyl

And a worthy demonstracion
In myne ymagynacion
Geffray, thou wotest wel this
That euery kyndely thynge that is
Hath a kyndely stede there he
May best in it conserued be
Unto whiche place euery thynge
Through hys kyndely enclynynge
Moueth for to come to
Whan that it is away therfro
As thus. Lo lowerthou mayste al day se
Take any thynge that heuy be
As stone oz leed, oz thinge of weyght
And bere it neuer so hye on heyght
Let go thyne hande, it falleth downe
Right so say I by fire oz sowne
Oz smoke, oz otherthinges lyght
Alway they seke upward on heyght
Light thinges up, and downwarde charge
Whyle euerliche of hem be at large
And for this cause, thou mayst wel se
That euery ryuer into the see
Enclyned is to go by kynde
And by these skylles as I fynde
Haue fyshes dwellinge in flode and see
And trees eke on the erthe be
Thus euery thynge by his reason
Hath his owne proper mancyon
To whiche it seketh to repeyre
There as it shulde nat appeyre
Lo, this sentence is knowen couthe
Of euery Philosophers mouthe,
As Aristotel, and dan Platone
And other clerkes many one
And to confirme my reasoune
Thou wost wel that speche is sowne
Oz els no man might it here
Nowe herke what I wol the lere
Sowne is not but eyre ybroken
And euery speche that is spoken
Loude oz pryue, foule oz fayre
In his substaunce is but eyre
For as flame is but lyghted smoke
Right so is sowne eyre ybroke
But this may be in many wyse
Of whiche I wyl the deuyse
As sowne cometh of pype oz harpe
For whan a pype is blowen sharpe
The eyre is twyst with violence
And rent: Lo, thys is my sentence
Eke, whan men harpe stringes smyte
Whether it be mothe oz lyte
Lo, with the stroke the eyre it breketh

And

And right so breaketh it whan men speketh
Thus wost thou wel what thynge is speche
Nowe hens forthe, I wyl thee teche
Howe euerysche speche, voyce or sowne
Throughe hys multyplycatyowne
Thoughe it were pyped of a mouse
Wote nedes come to Fames house
I proue it thus, take hede nowe
By experyence, for yf that thou
Threwe in a water nowe a stone
Wel wostethou it wyl make anone
A lytel roundel as a cercle
Paraventure, as brode as a couercle
And right anone thou shalte se wele
That whele cercle wyl cause another whele
And that the thirde, and so forthe brother
Euery cercle causynge other
Brader than hym selfe was
And thus from roundel to compas
Eche aboute other goynge
Causeth of others sterynge
And multyplyeng euermo
Tyl it be so farre go
That it at bothe brynkes be
Althoughe thou maye it not se
Aboue, yet gothe it alwaye vnder
Though thou thynke it a great wonder
And who so sayethe of trouthe I vary
Bydde hym proue the contrary
And ryght thus euery worde ywis
That loude or pryue yspoken is
Moueth fyrste an eyre aboute
And of hys mouynge eut of doute
Another eyre anone is moued
As I haue of the water proued
That euetye cercle causeth other
Right so of eyre my leue brother
Euerysche eyre in other stereth
More and more, and speche vp bereth
Or voyse or noyse, worde or sowne
Fyre through multyplicatyowne
Tyl it be at the house of Fame
Take it on ernest or in game
Nowe haue I tolde, if thou haue mynde
Howe speche or sowne, of pure kynde
Enclyned is vpwarde to meue
This mayst thou fele wel by preue
And that some stede ywys
That euery thynge enclyned to is
Hathe hys kyndelyche stede
That sheweth it without drede
That kyndely the mancyoun
Of euerysche speche of euery soun
Be it eyther soule or fayre
Hath hys kynde place in eyre
And syth that euery thynge ywys
Out of hys kynde place ywys
Moueth thyder for to go
Yf it awaye be therfro
As I haue before proued the
It sheweth euery soune perde
Moueth kyndely to pace
As vp in to hys kynde place
And thys place of whiche I tell
There as Fame lyste to dwell
Is fette a myddes of these thre
Heuen, erthe, and eke the see
As moste conseruatyfe the soun
Than is thys the conclusyoun
That euery speche of euery manne
As I thee tel fyrste beganne
Moueth vp on heyght to pace
Kyndely to Fames place
Tel me thys nowe faythfully
Haue I not proued thus symply
Without anye subtelte
Of speche, or great prolyxyte
Of termes of Philosophye
Of fygures of Poetrye
Or colours of Rethorike
Perde it oughte the to lyke
For harde langage, and harde matere
Is in combrous for to here
At ones, woste thou not wel thys
And I answered and sayde yes
Ah ha (quod he) lo so I can
Lewdlye vnto a leude man
Speke, and shewe hym suche skylles
That he maye shake hem by the bylles
So palpable they shulden be
But tel me thys nowe praye I the
Howe thynketh the my conclusyoun
A good persuasyon
(Quod I) it is and lyke to be
Right so as thou haste proued me
By God (quod he) and as I leue
Thou shalte haue it or it be eue
Of euery worde of thys sentence
I prose, by experyence
And with thyne eares heaten wel
Coppe and tayle, and euery del
That euery worde that spoken is
Cometh in to Fames house ywys
As I haue sayde, what wylte thou more
And with thys worde vpper to sore
He began, and sayde by saynte Jame

Nowe

Nowe wyl we speke al of game
Nowe farest thou nowe (quod he) to me
Wel (quod I) nowe se (quod he)
Wyl thy tʒouthe yonde adowne
Where that thou knowest any towne
Or house, or any other thynge
And whan thou haste of ought knowynge
Loke that thou warne me
And I anone shal tel the
Nowe farre that thou arte nowe therfro
And I adowne gan to loken tho
And beheilde feldes and playnes
Nowe hylles, and nowe mountaynes
Nowe valeys, and nowe forestes
And nowe vnneth great bestes
Nowe ryuers, nowe cities
Nowe townes, nowe great trees
Nowe shyppes saylinge in the see
But thus soone in a whyle he
Was flowen fro the grounde so hye
That al the worlde as to myne eye
No more semed than a pryncke
Or els was the eyze so thycke
That I myght it not discerne
With that he spake to me so yerne
And sayd: Seest thou any token
Or ought, that in thys worlde ok spoken
I sayde naye, no wonder is
(Quod he) for neuer halfe so hye as this
Was Alexander of Macedon
Kynge: Ne of Rome dan Scipion
That sawe in dreame at poynte deuyse
Heuen and erthe, hel and paradyse
Ne eke the wretche Dedalus
Ne hys chylde nyce Icharus
That flewe so hye, that the hete
Hys wynges molte, and he fel wete
In mydde the see, and there he dreynte
For whom was made a great complaynte
Nowe tourne vpwarde (quod he) thy face
And beholde thys large place
Thys eyze, but loke that thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalte se
For in this regyoun certeyne
Dwelleth many a cytezeyne (*)-(*)
Of whiche speketh dan Plato
These ben the eyzyshe bestes lo
And tho sawe I al the menye
Bothe gone and also flye
Lo (quod he) can vp thyne eye
Se yonder lo, the Galaxye
The whiche men clepe the mylky way
For it is whyte: And some parfay
Callen it Watlynge strete
That ones was brente with the hete
Whan the Sunnes sonne the reade
That hyte Pheton wolde leade
Ygate his fathers carte, and gye
The carte he gan wel aspye
That he coude no gouernaunce (*)
And gan for to lepe and pryuce
And beare hym vp, and nowe downe
Tyl he sawe the Scorpiowne
Whiche that in heuen a sygne is yet
And he for fere loste hys wyt
Of that, and let the reynes gone
Of hys horse, and they anone
Soone vp to mounte, and downe discende
Tyl bothe eyze and erthe brende
Tyl Jupiter so, at the laste
Hym slewe, and fro the carte caste
Lo, is it not a great mischaunce
To let a foole haue gouernaunce
Of thynges that he can not demayne
And with this worde sothe for to sayne
He gan alway vpper to sore
And gladed me than more and more
So faythfully to me spake he
Tho gan I to loke vnder me
And beheilde the eyzyshe bestes
Cloudes, mystes, and tempestes
Showres, hayles, rayne, and wyndes
And theyr dryuynge in her kyndes
Al the way thrughe whiche I came
O god (quod I) that made Adame
Muche is thy myght and noblesse
And tho thought I vpon Dorce
That wyseth a thought may flye so hye
With fethers of Philosophye
To passen euery cyrcle Element
And when he hath so farre ywent
Than may he fynde behynde hys backe
Cloude and erthe, and al that I of spake
Tho gan I wexe in a were
And sayd, I wote wel I am here
But whether in body or in goost
I not ywis, but god thou wooste
For more clere entendement
Was me neuer yet ysent
And than thought I on Marcyan
And eke of Anticlaudian
That sothe was her descripcion
Of al the heuens regyon
As farre as that I sawe the pryme
And therfore I can hem leue
With that the Egle gan to crye

With that the Egle gan to crye
Let be (qd̄ he) thy fantasye
Wylt thou lerne of sterres ought
Nay certaynly (qd̄ I) right nought
And why (qd̄ he) for I am olde
Or elis wolde I the haue tolde
(Quod he) the sterres nam.. lo
And al the heuens sygnes to
And whiche they ..: No force (quod I)
Yes perde (qd̄ he) wost thou why
For whan thou redest poetry
How the goddes can stellyfy
Hyde, Fyssche, or hym, or her
As the Rauyn and other
Or Iriones harpe fyne
Castor, Polexe, or Delphyne
Or Athalantes doughters seuen
Howe all these are ..n heuen
For though thou haue hem ofte in hande
Yet nost thou nat where they stande
No force (quod I) it is no nede
As wel I leue so god me spede
Hem that writen of this matere
As though I knewe her places here
And eke thy reuen here so bright
It shulde shenden al my syght
To loke on hem, that may wel be
(Quod he) and so forth bare he me
A whyle, and tho began to crye
That neuer herde I thynge so hye
Holde vp thyne heed, for al is wel
Mayster Iulyan lo, bonne hostel
Se here the house of fame lo
Wylt thou not here that I do
What (quod I) the great sowne
(Quod he) that romblyth vp and downe
In fames house ful of tydynges
Bothe of fayre speche and chydynges
And of false, and sothe compowned
Herken wel it is not rowned
Herest thou not the great swough
Yes perde (quod I) well ynough
And what sowne is it lyke (quod he)
Peter, lyke the beatyng of the see
(Qd̄ I) agaynst the roches balowe
Whan tempestes dore her shyppes swalowe
And that a man stande out of doute
A myle thens, and here it route
Or elis lyke the humblynge
After the clappe of a thundrynge
Whan Iouis hath the eyre ybete
But it dothe me for feare swete
Nay, drede the not therof (quod he)
It is nothyng that wyl byten the
Thou shalt haue no harme truely
And with that worde both he and I
As myghe the place aryued were
As men myght cast with a spere
I nyste howe, but in a strete
He set me fayre on my fete
And sayd, walke forth a pace
And tell thyne aduenture and case
That thou shalte fynde in Fames place
Nowe (quod I) whyle we haue space
To speke, or that I go fro the
For the loue of god tell me
In sothe, that I wyll of the lere
If this noyse that I here
Be as I haue herde the tell
Of folke, that done in erthe dwell
And cometh here in the same wyse
As I the herde or this deuyse
And that here lyues body nys
In all that house that yonder is
That maketh al this loude fare
No (qd̄ he) by saint Clare
And also wysse god rede me
But o thynge I wyll warne the
Of the whiche thou wylte haue wonder
Lo, to the house of Fame yonder
Thou woste howe cometh euery speche
It nedeth not the erste to teche
But vnderstande nowe right wel this
Whan any speche ycomen is
Vp to the palays anone right
It wexeth lyke the same wyght
Whiche that the worde in earth spake
Be he clothed in reed or blake
And hath so very his lyknesse
And spake the worde that thou wylte gesse
That it the same body be
Man or woman, he or she
And is not thys a wonder thynge
Yes (qd̄ I tho) by heuen kynge
And with this worde farewell (quod he)
And here wyl I abyde the
And god of heuen sende the grace
Some good to learne in this place
And I of him toke leaue anone
And gan forth to the palays gone

Explicit liber secundus.

God of scyence and of lyght
Apollo thrʒough thy great myght
This lytel laste boke now thou gye.
Nowe that I wyll forʒ maystrye
Here arte poeteycal be shewde
But forʒ the ryme is lyght and lewde
Yet make it somwhat agreable
Though some verse fayle in a syllable
And that I do no diligence
To shewe crafte, but sentence
And if deuine vertue thou
Wylte helpe me to shewe nowe
That in my herd ymarked is
Lo, that is forʒ to meanen this
The house of Fame forʒ to discryue
Thou shalt se me go as blyue
Unto the next laurer I se
And hyde it, forʒ it is thy tree
Nowe entre in my brest anone
Whan I was from the egle gone
I gan beholde vpon this place
And certayne ʒe I further passe
I wol you al the shappe deuyse
Of house and eyre, and all the wyse
Howe I gan to this place aprʒoche
That stode vpon so hye a roche
Hyer standeth none in Spayne
But vp I clambe with muche payne
And though to clymbe greued me
Yet I ententyfe was to se
And forʒ to ʒoren wondre lowe
If I coude any wyse yknowe
What maner stone this roche was
Forʒ it was lyke a lymed glas
But that it shone ful moʒe clere
But of what congeled matere
It was, I nyste redely
But at the laste espyed I
And founde that it was enerydele
A roche of yse and not of stele
Thought I, by saynt Thomas of Kent
This were a feble foundement
To bylden on a place hye
He ought him lytel to glozifye
That heron bylte, god so me saue
Tho sawe I all the hal ygraue
With famous folkes names fele
That had bene in muche wele
And her fames wyde yblowe
But wel vneth myght I knowe
Any letters forʒ to rede
Her names by, forʒ out of drede
They weren almoste of thawed so
That of the letters one ʒe two
Were molte alwaye of euerye name
So vnfamous was wexe her fame
But men saye, what maye euer laste
Tho gan I in myne herte caste
That they were molte awaye forʒ hete
And nat awaye with stormes bete
Forʒ on that other syde I sey
Of this hyll, that northwarde ley
Howe it was written ful of names
Of folke that had aforʒe great fames
Of olde tyme, and yet they were
As freshe as men had wʒytten hem there
The selfe day, ʒe that houre
That I on hem gan to poure
But well I wyste what it made
It was conserued with the shade
All the wʒytynge that I sye
Of a Castell that stode on hye
And stode eke in so colde a place
That heate myght it nat deface
Tho gan I on this hyll to gone
And founde on the coppe a wone
That al the men that bene on lyue
Ne han the cunnynge to discryue
The beaute of that ylke place
Ne coude caste no compace
Suche another forʒ to make
That myght of beaute be his make
Ne so wonderlye ywʒought
That it astonyeth yet my thought
And maketh all my wytte to swynke
On this castell forʒ to thynke
So that the great beaute
The caste, crafte, and curiosyte
Ne can I nat to you deuyse
My wytte ne maye me not suffyse
But natheles alle the substaunce
I haue yet in my remembʒaunce
Forʒ why me thought by saynt Gyle
All was of stone of Beryle
Bothe the castel and the toure
And eke the hall, and euery boure
Without peces ʒe ioynynges
But many subtell compassynges
As babewries and pynnacles
Imageries and tabernacles
I saw, and ful eke of wyndowes
As flakes fallen in great showes

And eke in eche of the pynacles
Weren sondry habytacles
In whiche sloden all withouten
Full the castell all abouten
Of all maner of mynstrales
And iestours that tellen tales
Bothe of wepyng and of game
And of all that longeth vnto fame
There herde I playe on an harpe
That sowned bothe well and sharpe
Pym Orpheus full craftely
And on this syde fast by
Satte the harper Orion
And Eacides Chiron
And other harpers manye one
And the Breton Glaskyrione
And smale harpers with her glees
Satte vnder hem in dyuers sees
And gone on hem vpwarde to gape
And counterfayted hem as an ape
Or as crafte counterfeyte kynde
Tho sawe I standen hem behynde
Farre from hem, al by hem selue
Many a thousande tymes twelue
That made loude mynstralsyes
In cornmuse and shalmyes
And manye an other pype
That craftely began to pype
Bothe in douced and in rede
That ben at festes wyth the bryde
And many a floyte and lytlynge horne
And pypes made of grene corne
As haue these lytel herde gromes
That kepen bestes in the bromes
There sawe I than dan Cytherus
And of Athenes dan Proserus
And Marcia that loste her shynne
Bothe in face, bodye, and chynne
For that she wolde enuyen, lo
To pypen bette than Apollo
There sawe I eke famous olde and yonge
Pypers of all the duche tonge
To lerne loue dauces, springes
Reyes, and the straunge thynges
Tho sawe I in another place
Standynge in a large space
Of hem that maken bloudy soun
In trumpe berne, and claryoun
For in fyght and blode shedynges
Is bled gladly clarionynges
There herde I trumpe Messenus
Of whome that speketh Vergilius
There herde I Joab trumpe also
Theodomas and other mo
And al that vsed clarion
In Castelloygne, and Aragon
That in her tymes famous were
To lernen sawe I trumpen there
There sawe I syttе in other sees
Playeng vpon other soudyre glees
Whiche that I can not neuen
Mo than sterres ben in heuen
Of whiche I nyl as nowe nat tyme
For ese of you, and losse of tyme
For tyme ylost, this knowe ye
By no waye maye recouered be
There sawe I playenge iogelours
Magyciens and tregetours
And Phetonysses charmeresses
Olde witches sorceresses
That vsen exorcisacions
And eke subfumygacions
And clerkes eke whiche conne well
All thys magyke naturell
That craftely do her ententes
To maken in certayne ascendentes
Ymages lo, through whiche magyke
To maken a man bene hole or syke
There sawe I the quene Medea
And Cyrces eke, and Calliphia
There sawe I Hermes Ballenus
Lymote, and eke Symon Magus
There sawe I, and knewe by name
That by suche arte done men haue fame
There sawe I Coll tregetour
Upon a table of Sycamour
Playe an vncouthe thynge to tell
I sawe hym cary a wynde mell
Under a walnote shale
What shoulde I make lenger tale
Of all the people that I sey
I coulde not tell tyll domisdey
When I had al this folke beholde
And founde me loce and not holde
And I amused a longe whyle
Upon thys wall of Beryle
That shone lyghter than a glas
And made wel more than it was
As kynde thynge of fame is
And than anon after this
I gan forthe romen tyll I fonde
The castell yate on my ryghte honde
Whiche so well corurn was
That neuer suche another nas
And yet it was by auenture
Ywrought by great and subtyll cure

It nedeth not you moze to tellen
To make you to longe dwellen
Of theſe yates ſtozthynges
Ne of compaces,ne of karuynges
Ne howe the hackynge in maſonryes
As cozbettes,and ymageries
But lozde ſo fayze it was to ſhewe
Foz it was all with golde behewe
But in I went,and that anone
There met I cryenge many one
I larges a larges,holde vp wel
God ſaue the lady of this pel
Our owne gentyl lady Fame
And hem that wyllen to haue a name
Of vs, thus herde I cryen all
And faſt comen out of the hall
And ſhoke nobles and ſtarlynges
And crowned were as kynges
With crotones wzought ful of loſynges
And many ribans,and many frynges
Were on her clothes truely
Tho at the laſt eſpyed I
That purſuauntes and heraudes
That cryen riche folkes laudes
It weren,al and euery man
Of hem,as I you tel can
Had on hym thzowe a veſture
Whiche men clepe a cote armure
Embzoudzed wonderly riche
As though they were not ylyche
But nought wyl I ſo mote I thzyue
Be aboute to diſcryue
Al theſe armes that there weren
That they thus on her cotes weren
Foz to me were impoſſyble
Wen myght make of hem a byble
Twenty fote thicke as I trowe
Foz certayne who ſo coude knowe
Wyght there al the armes ſeen
Of famous folke that had been
In Affrike,Europe,and Aſye
Sithe firſt began chenalrye
Lo,how ſhuld I now tel al this
Ne of the hal eke what nede is
To tellen you that euery wal
Of it,and rofe and flooze with al
Was plated halfe a fote thycke
Of golde,and that nas not wycke
But foz to pzoue in all wyſe
As fyne as ducket in Venyſe
Of whiche to lyte al in my pouche is
And they were ſet as thicke of ouches
Fyne,of the fyneſt ſtones fayze
That men reden in the lapidayze
Oz as graſſes growen in a mede
But it were al to longe to rede
The names:and therfoze I paſſe
But in this lufty and riche place
That Fames hal called was
Ful moche pzees of folke there nas
Ne cruodyng,foz to moche pzees,
But al on hye aboue a deys (:)(:)
Satte in a ſee imperiall
That made was of a Ruby royal
Which that a carbuncle is yealled
I ſawe perpetually yſtalled
A ſemyvyne creature (:)
That neuer fozmed by nature
Was ſuche another thynge I ſay
Foz altherfirſt,ſoth to ſay
Me thought that ſhe was ſo lyte
That the length of a cubyte
Was lenger than ſhe ſemed be
But thus ſoone in a while ſhe (:)
Her ſelfe tho wonderly ſtreyght
That with her fete ſhe therthe reyght
And with her herd ſhe touched heuen
There as ſhyneth the ſterres ſeuen
And therto yet,as to my wyt
I ſawe a great wonder yet
Upon her eyen to beholde
But certaynly I hem neuer tolde,
Foz as feie eyen had ſhe (:)
As fethers vpon foules be
Oz weren on the beeſtes foure
That goddes trone can honoure
As wzyteth Johan in the Apocalyps
Her heer that was owndy and cryps
As burned golde it ſhone to ſe
And ſothe to tellen alſo ſhe
Had alſo feie vp ſtandynge eares
And tonges,as on beeſt ben heares,
And on her fete woren ſawe I
Partriche wynges redyly (((O
But lozde the perry and the rycheſſe
I ſawe ſyttyng on the goddeſſe
And the heuenly melody
Of ſonges ful of armony
I herde aboute her trone ylonge
That al the palays wal ronge
So ſonge the myghty Muſe ſhe
That cleped is Caliope
And her ſeuen ſyſterne eke
That in her faces ſemen meke
And euermoze eternally
They ſonge of Fame tho herde I

Heryed

Herryed be thou and thy name
Goddes of renoun and of fame
Tho was I ware at the laste
As I myne eyen gan vp caste
That this ylke noble quene
On her shulders gan susteyne
Bothe the armes and the name
Of tho that had large fame
Alysander, and Hercules
That with a sherte hys lyfe dyd lese
And thus founde I syttynge thys goddesse
In noble honour and richesse
Of whiche I stynte a whyle nowe
Other thynge to tellen you
Tho sawe I stande on thother syde
Streyght downe to the dores wyde
From the dres many a pyllere
Of metal, that shone not ful clere
But thoughe they were of no richesse
Yet were they made for great noblesse
And in hem great sentence
And folke of hye and digne reuerence
Of whiche to tell wyl I fonde
Upon a pyller sawe I stonde
Alderfirst there I sye (:c:,:c:, c:,:)
Upon a pyller stonde on hye
That was of lede and of yron fyne
Hym of the seete saturnyne
The Ebrayke Josephus the olde
That of Jewes gestes tolde
And he bare on his shulders hye
The fame vp of the Jurye
And by hym stoden other seuen
Wyse and worthy for to neuen (vii)
To helpē hym bere vp the charge
It was so heuye and so large
And for they wryten of batayles
As well as of other meruayles
Therefore was lo, thys pyllere
Of whyche I you tell here
Of leed and yron bothe ywis
For yron Martes metal is ((::))
Whiche that god is of batayle
And the leed withouten fayle
Is lo, the metal of Saturne
That hathe full large whele to turne
To stande forthe on eyther rowe
Of hem, whiche I couthe knowe
Thoughe I by order hem not tell
To make you to longe to dwell (r)
These, of whiche I gan rede
There sawe I stande out of drede
Upon an yron pyller stronge
That paynted was al endlonge
With Tygres blode in euery place
The Tholason that heyght Stace
That bare of Thebes vp the name (r)
Upon his shulders, and the fame
Also of cruel Achylles
And by hym stode wythouten lees
Ful wonder hye vpon a pyller
Of yron, he the great Omer
And wyth hym Dares and Tytus
Before, and eke he Lollyus
And Guydo eke the Colempnis (:)(:)(:
And Englyshe Galfride eke ywis
And eche of these as I haue sayd
Was busy to beare vp Troye
So heuy therof was the fame
That for to beare it was no game
But yet I gan ful well espye
Betwene hem was a lytell enuye
One sayde that Omer made lyes
Feynynge in his poetries (ccccc
And was to the Grekes fauourable
Therefore helde heit but fable
Tho sawe I stande on a pyllere
That was of tynned yron clere
The latyn poete Vergyle (cc
That hath boze vp a longe whyle
The fame of Pius Eneas
And nexte him on a pyller was
Of copper, Venus clerke Ouyde
That hathe sowen wonders wyde
The great god of loues fame
And there he bare vp well hys name
Upon thys pyller also hye
As I myghte se it wyth myne eye
For why thys hall wherof I rede
Was woxe on heyght, length, and brede
Well moze by a thousande dele
Than it was erst, that sawe I wele
Tho sawe I on a pyller by
Of yron wrought full sternely (:)
The great poete dan Lucan
That on his shulders bare vp than
As hye as that I myghte se
The fame of Julyus and Pompee
And by him stoden all these clerkes
That write of Romes mighty werkes
That if I wolde her names tell
I'll to longe must I dwell (ccc)
And nexte hym on a pyller stode
Of Sulphure, lyche as he were wode
Dan Claudian, lothe for to tell
That bare vp al the fame of Hell

Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne
That quene is of the derke pyne
What shulde I more tel of this
The hal was al ful ywys
Of hem that wryten olde iestes
As bene on trees rokes nestes
But it a ful confuse matere
Were al these iestes for to here
That they of wryte, and howe they heyght
But whyle that I beheld this syght
I herde a noyse approchen blyue
That fareth as bees done in an hyue
Agaynst her tyme of out flyenge
Right suche a maner murmurynge
For al the worlde it semed me
Tho gan I loke aboute and se
That there come entrynge into the hal
A tyght great company wythal
And that of sondry regions
Of al kyns condicyons
That dwel in erthe vnder the moone
Poore and ryche, and also soone
As they were come into the hal
They gan on knees downe to fal
Before this ilke noble quene
And sayd, graunt vs lady shene
Eche of vs ok thy grace auone
And some of hem she graunted soone
And some she warned wel and fayre
And some she graunted the contrayre
Of her askynge vtterly
But this I say you trewly
What her grace was I nyst
For of these folke ful wel I wyst
They had good fame eche deserued
Al thoughe they were dyuersly serued
Right as her syster dame Fortune
Is wont to serue in commune
Nowe herken howe she gan to paye
Hem that gan her of grace praye
And yet lo, al this company
Seyden sothe, and not a lye
Madame sayd they, we be
Folke that here beseechen the
That thou graunt vs nowe good fame
And let our workes haue good name
In ful recompensacioun
Of good worke, gyue vs good renoun
I warne it you (quod she) anone
Ye get of me good fame none
By god, and therfore go your way
Alas (quod they) and welaway
Tel vs what your cause may be
For me lyste it not (quod she)
No wight shal speke of you ywis
Good ne harme, ne that ne this
And with that worde she gan to cal
Her messenger that was in hal
And bad that he shulde faste gone
Upon payne to be blynde anone
For Eolus the god of wynd
In Trace there ye shal him fynde
And byd him bringe his clarioun
That is full dyuers of his sowne
And it is cleped clere Laude
With which he wont is to herande
Hem that me lyst ypraysed be
And also byd hym howe that he
Bringe eke his other clarioun
That heyght Sclaund. in euery towne
With whiche he wonte is to diffame
Hem that me lyst and do hem shame
This messenger gan fast to gone
And founde wher in a caue of stone
In a countre that height Trace
This Eolus with harde grace
Held the wyndes in distresse
And gan hem vnder him to presse
That they gone as the beres roze
He bounde and pressed hem so soze
This messenger gan fast crye
Rise vp (quod he) and fast the hye
Tyl thou at my lady be
And take thy clarions eke with the
And spede the fast, and he anone
Toke to one that heyght Tryton
His claryons to beaten tho
And let a certayne wynde go
That blewe so hydously and hye
That it ne lefte not a skye
In al the welken long and brode
This Eolus no where abode
Tyl he was come to Fames fete
And eke the man that Triton hete
And there he stode as styll as stone
And here withal there came anone
Another huge company
Of good folke and gan to crye
Lady, graunt vs nowe good fame
And let our workes haue that name
Nowe in honour of gentylnesse
And also god your soule blesse
For we han wel deserued it
Therfore is right that we be quyt
As thryue I (quod she) ye shal fayle
Good workes shal you not auayle

To haue of me good fame as nowe
But wote ye what, I graunt yowe
That ye shal haue a shrewde name
And wicked loos, and worse fame
Thoughe ye good loos haue wel deserued
Nowe gothe your way ... ye ben serued
And thou dan Eolus (quod she)
Take forthe thy trompe anone let se
That is ycleped Sclaunder lyght
And blowe her loos, that euery wyght
Speke of hem harme and shrudnesse
In stede of good and worthynesse
For thou shalte trumpe al the contrayre
Of that they haue done, wel and fayre
Alas thought I what auentures
Haue these sory creatures
That they amonge ... the pres
Shulde thus be shamed gyltles
But what, it muste nedes be
What dyd this Eolus, but he
Toke out hys blacke trumpe of bras
That fouler than the deuyl was
And gan thys trumpe for to blowe
As al the worlde shulde ouerthrowe
Throughout euery regyoun
Went this foule trumpes soun
As swyfte as a pellet out of a gonne
Whan fyre is in the pouder ronne
And suche a smoke gan out wende
Out of the foule trumpes ende
Blacke, blo, grenyshe, swartyshe, rede
As dothe where that men melte lede
Lo, al on hye from te wel
And therto one thynge sawe I wel
That the ferther that it ranne
The greater wexen it beganne
As dothe the ryuer from a wel
And it stanke as the pytte of hel
Alas, thus was her shame yronge
And gyltlesse on euery tonge
Tho came the thyrde company
And gon vp to the dees to hye
And downe on knees they fel anone
And sayden, we ben euerychone
Folke that han ful trewely
Deserued fame ryght fully
And prayde you it myght be knowe
Ryght as it is and forthe blowe
I graunte (quod she) for nowe me lyst
That your good workes shal be wyst
And yet ye shal haue better loos
Ryght in dispyte of al your foos
Than worthy is, and that anone
Lette nowe (quod she) thy trumpe gone
Thou Eolus, that is so blacke
And out thyn other trumpe take
That hyght Laude, and blowe it so
That thrugh the worlde her fame go
Al eafly and nat to fast
That it be knowen at the last
Ful gladly lady myne he sayde
And out his trumpe of golde he brayde
Anone, and sette it to hys mouthe
And blewe it eest, west, and southe
And northe, as loude as anye thonder
That euery wight hath of it wonder
So brode it ran or that it stent
And certes al the brethe that went
Out of his trumpes mouthe smelde
As men a potte ful of baume helde
Amonge a basket ful of roses
Thys fauour dyd he to her loses
And ryght with thys I gan espye
There came the fourthe companye
But certayne they were wonder fewe
And gonne to standen on a rewe
And sayden, certes lady bryght
We haue done wel with al our myght
But we ne kepe to haue fame
Hyde our workes and our name
For goddes loue, for certes we
Haue surely done it for bounte
And for no maner other thynge
I graunte you al your askynge
(Quod she) let your workes be deed
With that aboute I tourned myheed
And sawe anone the fyfte route
That to thys lady gan loute
And downe on knees anone to fal
And to her tho besoughten al
To hyden her good workes eke
And sayd, they yeue nat a leke
For no fame, ne suche renouon
For they for contemplacyoun
And goddes loue had it wrought
Ne of fame wolde they nought
What (quod she) and be ye woode
And wene ye for to do goode
And for to haue of that no fame
Haue ye dispyte to haue my name
Nay ye shal lyen euerychone
Blowe thy trumpe and that anone
(Quod she) thou Eolus I hote
And synge these folkes workes by note
That al the worlde maye of it here
And he gan blowe her loos so clere
In hys golden claryoun
Throughe the worlde went the soun

Al so kyndely, and eke so softe
That their fame was blowe a lofte
Tho came the fyrst companye
And gan calle to Fame crye
Right verily in thys manere
They sayden, mercy lady dere
To tel certayne as it is
We haue done neither that ne this
But ydel al oure lyfe hath be
But natheleſſe yet pray we
That we may haue as good a fame
And great renome and knowen name
As they that haue do noble ieſtes
And acheued al her queſtes
As wel of loue as other thynge
Al was hs neuer bzothe ne tynge
Ne els what fro women kept
Ne ones in her herte yment
To makrn vs onely frendely chere
But mought temen vs on bere
Yet let vs to the people ſeme
Suche as the wozlde may of vs deme
That wommen louen vs foz wozde
It shal do vs as muche good
And to our herte as muche auayle
The counterpeyſe, eaſe, and trauayle
As we had won with labour
Foz that is dere bought honour
At regarde of our great eaſe
And yet ye muſt vs moze pleaſe
Let vs be holde eke therto
Wozthy, wyſe, and good alſo
And ryche, and happy vnto loue
Foz goddes loue that ſytteth aboue
Though we may not the body haue
Of women, yet ſo god me ſaue
Lette men gleowe on vs the name
Suffyſeth that we haue the fame
I graunt (quod ſhe) by my trouthe
Nowe Eolus withouten ſlouthe
Take out thy trumpe of golde (quod ſhe)
And blowe as they haue aſked me
That euery man wene hem at eaſe
Though they go in ful badde leaſe
This Eolus gan it ſo blowe
That throughe the wozlde it was yknowe
Tho came the ſeuenth route anone
And fyl on knees euerychone
And ſayd, lady graunt vs ſoone
The ſame thynge, the ſame boone
That this nert folke haue done
Fye on you (quod ſhe) euerychone
Ye maſty ſwyne, ye ydle wzetches
Ful of roten ſlowe tetches
What falſe theues, where ye woſde
Ben famed good, and nothyng nolde
Deſerue why, ne neuer thought
Wen rather you to hangen ought
Foz ye be lyke the ſleppe cat
That wolde haue fiſche: but woſt thou what
He wol nothynge were hys clawes
Yuel thzifte come to your iawes
And on myne yf I it graunt
Oz do fauour you to auaunt
Thou Eolus, thou kynge of Trace
Go blowe this folke a ſozy grace
(Quod ſhe) anone, and woſt thou howe
As I ſhal tel the rygbt nowe
Say theſe ben they that wolde honour
Haue, and do no kyns labour
Ne do no good, and yet haue laude
And that men wende that belle I ſaude
Ne coude hem not of loue werne
And yet ſhe that gryut at querne
Is al to good to eaſe her herte
This Eolus anone by ſterte
And with hys blacke clarioun
He gan to blaſen out a ſoun
As loude as belleth wynde in hel
And eke therwith ſothe to tel
This ſowne was ſo ful of iapes
As euer mowes were in apes
And that went al the wozlde aboute
That euery wight gan on hem ſhoute
And foz to laugh as they were wode
Suche game founde they in her hode
Tho came another companye
That hadde ydone the trechery
The harme and great wickenneſſe
That any herte coudeu geſſe
And prayed her to haue good fame
And that ſhe nolde do hem no ſhame
But gyue hem loos and good renoun
And do it blowe in clarioun
Nay wis (quod ſhe) it were a byte
Al be there in me no iuſtyce
Me lyſt not to do it nowe
Ne thys I nyl graunt it you
Tho came there leappynge in route
And gan clappen al aboute
Euery man vpon the crowne
That al the hal gan to ſowne
And ſayd, lady leſe and dere
We ben ſuche folkes as ye may here
To tel al the tale aryght
We ben thzewes euery wyght
And haue delyte in wickednelſe
As good folke haue in goodneſſe

And

And foye to ben knowen shrewes
And ful vyce and wicked thewes
Wherfore we pray you on a rowe
That our fame be suche yknowe
In al thinges ryght as it is
I graunte it you (quod she) ywis
But what arte thou that sayest this tale
That wearest on thy hose a pale
And on thy cyppet suche a bel
Madame (quod he) sothe to tel):(
I am that yike shrewe ywis
That brent the temple of Isidis
In Athenes, lothat cyte
And wherfore dyddest thou so (quod she)
By my trouthe (quod he) madame
I wolde fayne haue had a name
As other folke had in the towne
Although they were of great renowne
For her vertue and her thewes
Thought I, as great fame haue shrewes
(Though it be nought) for shrewdnesse
As good folke haue for goodnesse
And sythen I may not haue that one
That other wyl I not forgone
As for to get a fame here
The temple sette I al on fyre
Nowe done our loos be blowe swythe
As wysly be thou ever blythe
Gladly (quod she) thou Eolus
Herest thou not what they prayen vs
Madame yes, ful wel (quod he)
And I wyl trumpen it parde (:)
And toke hys blacke trumpe faste
And gan to puffen and to blaste
Tyl it was at the worldes ende
With that I gan aboute wende
For one that stode ryght at my backe
Me thought ful goodly to me spake
And sayd, frende what is thy name
Arte thou come hyder to haue fame (:)
Nay for sothe frende (quod I)
I come nat hyther grant mercy
For no suche cause by my heed
Suffyseth me, as I were deed
That no wyght haue my name in honde
I wot my selfe best howe I stonde
For what I dyde, or what I thynke
I wol my selfe al it dynke
Certayne for the more parte):(
As ferforth as I can myne arte
What doest thou here than (quod he)
(Quod I) that wol I tel the
The cause why I stande here
Some newe tydynges for to lere
Some newe thynge I not what
Tydynges eyther this or that
Of loue, or suche thynges glade
For certaynly he that me made
To come hyder, sayd to me
I shulde bothe here and se
In thys place wonder thynges
But these be no suche tydynges
As I ment of: No (quod he))r(
And I answerde, no parde
For wel I wote euer yet
Sythe that fyrste I had wyt
That some folke han desyred fame
Diuersly, and loos and name
But certaynly I nyl howe
Ne where that fame dwelled or nowe
Ne eke of her dyscripcyon
Ne also her condycion
Ne the order of her dome (:)
Knewe I not tyl I hyder come
Why than be lo these tydynges
That thou nowe hyther brynges
That thou haste herde (quod he) tome
But nowe no force, for wel I se
What thou desyrest for to lere
Come forth and stande no lenger here
And I wole the without drede
In to suche another place lede
There thou shalte here many one
Tho gan I forthe with hym gone
Out of the castel sothe to sey
Tho sawe I stande in a baley
Under the castel faste by
An house, that domus Dedaly
That Laborintus ycleped is
Was made so wonderly ywis (:)
Ne halfe so queyntly ywrought
And euermo, as swyfte as thought
This queynt house aboute went
That neuermo it styl stent
And there came out so great a noyse
That had it stonde vpon Oyse
Men might haue herde it easely
To Rome, I trowe sykerly
And the noyse whiche that I herde
For al the worlde ryght so it ferde)r(
As dothe the routynge of the stone
That fro thengyn is leryn gone
And al this house of whiche I rede
Was made of twyggen falowe rede
And grene eke, and some were whyte
Suche as men to the cages twhyte
Or maken of these panyers
Or els hutches or dossers,

That for the swough and for the swygges
Thys house was also ful of gygges
And also ful eke of chyrkynges
And of many other wonkynges
And eke thys house hath of entrees
As many as leues ben on trees
In sómer whan they bene grene
And on the rofe yet men may sene
A thousande holes, and wel mo
To letten the sowne out go
And by day in euery tyde
Ben al the doores open wyde
And by nyght eche one vnshette
Ne porte is there none to lette
No maner tydynges in to pace
Ne neuer rest is in that place
That it nys fylled ful of tydynges
Eyther loude or of whyspervnges
And euer al the houses angles
Is ful of rotvnynges and of iangles
Of werres, of peace, of marryages
Of restes, and of labour of vyages
Of abade of dethe, and of lyfe
Of loue, of hate, accorde, of stryfe
Of losse, of lore, and of wynnynges
Of heale, of sickenesse, or of lesynges
Of fayre wether, and eke of tempestes
Of qualm e of folke, and of bestes
Of dyuers transmutacyons
Of estates, and eke of regyons
Of trust, of drede, of ialousy
Of wytte, of wynnyng, of foly
Of plenty, and of great famyne
Of chepe, of derthe, and of ruyne
Of good or mysgouernment
Of fyre, and of dyuers accydent
And lo, this house of whiche I wryte
Syker be ye it nas not lyte
For it was fyftie myle of length
Al was the tymber of no strength
Yet it is founded to endure
Whyle that it lyste to Aventure
That is the mother of tydynges
As the sre of welles and sprynges
And it was shapen lyke a cage
Certes (quod I) in al myne age
Ne sawe I suche an house as this
And as I wondred me ywis
Upon this house, tho ware was I
Howe myne Egle faste by
Was perched hye vpon a stone
And I gan streyght to hym gone
And sayd thus, I pray the
That thou a whyle abyde me
For goddes loue, and let me sene
What wonders in that place bene
For yet peraunter I may lere
Some good therin, or somwhat here
That lese me were, or that I wente
Peter, that is knowe myne entente
(Quod he to me) therfore I dwel
But certayne one thynge shal I the tel
That but I hyng the there
Ne shal thou neuer come the gyn
To come in to it, out of doute
So faste it whyrleth lo aboute
But sythe that Ioues of hys grace
As I haue sayd, wyl the solace
Fynally with thy se thynges
Uncouthe syghtes and tydynges
To passe with thyne heuynesse
Suche routhe hath he of thy distresse
That thou suffredest debonairte
And wostest thy seluen vtterly
Desperate of al blysse
Sythe that fortune hath made a mysse
The swete of al thyne heetes rest
Languyshe, and eke in poynte to brest
But he through his mightie meryte
Wyl do the ease, al be it lyte
And gaue in expresse commaundement
To whyche I am obedyent
To forther the with al my myght
And wyshe and teche the ayrght
Where thou mayste most tydinges here
Thou shalte here many one lere
With thys worde he ryght anone
Hent me vp bytwene hys tone
And at a wyndowe in me brought
That in this house was, as me thought
And there withal me thought it stent
And nothynge it aboute went
And me set in the floore adoun
But suche a great congregacyoun
Of folke, as I sawe come aboute
Some within and some without
Nas neuer sene, ne shal be efte
That certes in this worlde nis lefte
So many formed by nature
Ne deed so many a creature
That wel myght in that place
Had I a foote brede of space
And euery wight that I sawe there
Rowned euerych in others ere
A newe tydynge prively
Or els he tolde it al openly
Ryght thus, and sayd: Hast nat thou

That

That is betydde, lo ryght nowe
No (quod he) tel me what
And than he tolde hym this and that
And swore therto, that it was sothe
Thus hath he sayd, and thus he dothe
And thys shal be, and thus herde I say
That shal be founde, that dare I lay
That al the folke that is on lyue
Se haue the konnynge to discryue
Tho thynges that I herde there
What a loude, and what in ere
But al the wonder moste was this
Whan one had herde a thynge ywis
He came streyght to another wyght
And gan hym tellen anone ryght
The same that hym was tolde
Or it a forlonge way was olde
And gan somwhat for to eche
To this tidyng in hys speche (ccccc)
More than euer it spoken was
And nat so sone departed nas
Tho fro hym that he ne mette
With the thyrde, and er he lette
Any stounde, he tolde hym alse
Were the tidynges sothe or false
Yet wolde he tel it natheles
And euer more with mo encrees
Than it was erst: thus northe and sothe
Went euery tydyng, fro mouth to mouthe
And that encreasynge euermo
As fyre is wont to quicken and go
From a sparcle sprongen amis
Tyl al a cyte brent vp is
And whan that was ful vp spronge
And waxen more on euery tonge
Than euer it was, and went anone
Vp to a wyndowe out to gone
Or but it might out there passe
It gan out crepe at some crenasse
And flewe forthe faste for the nones
And somtyme I sawe there a ones
A leasyng, and a sadde sothe sawe
That gonnen of auenture drawe
Out at a wyndowe for to pace
And whan they metten in that place
They were achecked bothe two)(
And neither of hem myght out go
For eche other they gonne so croude
Tyl eche of hem gan cryen loude
Let me gone first, nay but let me
And here I wol ensuren the
With nones that thou wolt do so
That I shal neuer fro the go
But be thyn owne swore brother
We wol meddle vs eche in other
That no man be he neuer so wrothe
Shal haue one two, but bothe
At ones, al besyde hys leue
Come we a morowe or on eue
Be we cryde or syl yrowned
Thus sawe I false and sothe compowned
Togyder flye for o tydynge
Thus out at holes gonne wrynge
Euery tyding streyght to Fame
And she gan yene eche hys name
After her dysposicion
And yeue hem eke duracion
Some to were and wane soone
As dothe the fayre whyte Moone
And let hem gonne, there might I seen
Wynged wonders fast flyen
Twenty thousande in a route
As Eolus hem blewe aboute
And lorde this house in al tymes
Was ful of shypmen and pylgrymes
With scrippes brette ful of leasynges
Entermelled with tydynges
And eke alone by hem selue
O many thousande tymes twelue
Sawe I eke of these pardoners
Currours, and eke messangers
With boxes crömed ful of lyes
As euer vessel was with iyes
And as I alther fastest went
Aboute, and dyd al myne entent
Me for to playen and for to lere
And eke a tydyng for to here
That I had herde of some countre
That shal not nowe be tolde for me
For it no nede is redily
Folke can synge it bet than I
For al mote out late or rathe
Al the sheues in the rathe
I herde a great noyse withal
In a corner of the hal
There men of loue tydynges tolde
And I gan thyderwarde beholde
For I sawe rennynge euery wyght
As faste as that they hadden myght
And euerych cryde, what thynge is that
And some sayd I not neuer what
And whan they were al on an heape
Tho behynde gonne vp lepe
And clamben vp on other faste
And vp the noyse on hyghen caste
And treden fast on others heles

And

And stampe as men done after eles
At the laste I sawe a man
Whiche that I nought ne can
But he semed for to be
A man of great auctorite
And there withal I abrayde
Out of my slepe halfe a frayde
Remembrynge wel what I had sene
And howe hye and serre I had bene
In my goost, and had great wonder
Of that the god of thonder
Had let me knowen, and began to wryte
Lyke as ye haue herde me endyte
Wherfore to study and rede alway
I purpose to do day by day
Thus in dreamynge and in game
Endeth this lytel boke of Fame.

Here foloweth the Testament of Loue.

The testament of Loue

Many men there ben, that with eres openly spradd so much swalowen þ delicyousnesse of iestes and of ryme, by queynt knittynge coloures, that of the goodnesse or of the badnesse of the sentence take they lytell hede or els none.

Sothelye dulle wyte and a thoughtfull soule, so sore haue myned and grafted in my spirytes, that suche craft of enditing wol nat ben of myne acquayntaūce. And for rude wordes and boystous peteth the hert of the herer to the inrest poynt, and planteth there the sentence of thynges, so that with litel helpe it is able to spryng. This boke that nothyng hath of the great floode of wyt, ne of semelyche colours, is dolven with rude wordes and boystous, and so drawe together to maken the catchers therof bē the more redy to hent sentēce.

Some men there ben that payuten with colours ryche, and some with bees, as with red ynke, and some with cooles and chalke: And yet is there good mater to the lewde people of thilke chalkye purtreyture, as hem thynketh for the tyme, and afterwarde the syght of the better colours yeuen to hem more ioye for the first lewdenesse. So sothly this lewde clowdy occupacion is not to prayse, but by the lewdenesse for comenly lewde lewdenesse cōmendeth. The it shal yeue sight to at other precious thinges shal be the more in reuerence. In latyn and frēch hath many souerayn wittes had great delyte to endyte, and haue many noble thynges fulfylde, but certes there ben some þ speken their poesye matere in frenche, of whiche speche the frenche men haue as good a fantasye as we haue in herynge of frenche menne englyshe. And many termes there ben in englyshe, whiche vneth we englyshe men connen declare the knowlegynge: Howe shulde than a frenche man born, suche termes conne sumpere in his mater, but as þ iay chatereth englyshe. Right so rewly the vnderstanding of englyshmen wol not stretche to the pryuye termes in frenche, what so euer we bosten of straunge langage. Let than clerkes endyten in latyn, for they haue the propertie of science and the knowynge in that faculte: and lette frenchmen in their frenche also endyten their queynt termes, for it is kyndely to their mothes, and let vs shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge. And although this boke be lytel thanke worthy for the lewdnesse in translatyng, yet such witynges exciten men to thilke thynges that ben necessarye: for euery man therby may as by a perpetual myrrour seme the vyces or vertues of other, in whiche thyng lightly may be conceyued to eschewe perils, and necessaries to catch, after as auentures haue fallen to other people or persōs. Certes þ souerayne thynge of desire and most creature reasonable, haue or els shulde haue ful appetyte to their perfection: vnreasonable bestes mowen not, for the reason hath in hem no worchynge: Than reasonable that wol not, is comparysoned to vnreasonable, and made lyke hem. For lothe the most souerayne and fynall perfection of man is in knowynge of a sothe, withouten any entent deceyuable, and in loue of one very god, that is inchaungrable, that is to knowe and loue hys creature. Now principally the meane to bringe in knowlegyng and louyng hys creatour, is the consideracion of thynges made by the creatour, wherthrough be thilke thinges that ben made vnderstanding here to our wittes, arne the vnsene priueties of god made

made to vs sightful and knowyng, in our cõtemplacion & vnderstõdyng. These thynges than forsoth moch bringen vs to ꝑ ful knowlegynge sothe, and to the parfyte loue of the maker of heuenly thynges. Lo Dauid sayth: thou hast delyted me in makynge, as who sayth, to haue delite in ꝑ tune how god hath lent me in consideracyon of thy makynge. wherof Aristot... the boke de Animalibus, saith to naturel phylosopheres: It is a greate lykyng in loue of knowynge theyr creatoure: and also in knowynge of causes makyndelye thiges cõsidred. Forsoth the formes of kyndly thynges and the shap, a great kindely loue me shulde haue to the werkman ꝑ hem made. The crafte of a werkeman is shewed in the werke. Herefore tr... the philosopheres with a lyuely studye manye noble thinges, ryghte precious and worthy to memorywriten, & by a great swetande trauayle to vs lefte of causes the proprtties in natures of thinges. To whyche therfore Philosopheres it was more ioy, more lykynge, more herry lust in kyndely vertues and matters of reason the perfectiõ by busy study to knowe, than to haue had all the tresour, al the richesse, al ꝑ vayneglory ꝑ the passed Emperours, Myners, or kynges hadde. Therfore the names of hem in ꝑ boke of perpetuall memorye in vertue & peace am wryten, and in the contrarye, that is to sayn, in fyre the foule pytte of helle am thilke pressed that suche goodnesse hated. And bycause this boke shal be of loue, and the pryme causes of sterynge in that doynge with passyons and dyseases for wantynge of delyte, I will that this boke be cleped ꝑ Testament of loue.

But now thou reder, who is thylke that wil not in scorne laughe, to here a dwarfe or els halfe a man, say he wyl rende out the swerde of Hercules handes, & also he shulde set Hercules gades a mile yet ferther, and ouer that he had power of strengih to pul vp the sperre, that Alisander ꝑ noble might neuer wagge.

And that passyng al thinge to ben mayster of fraunce by might, there as the noble gracyous Edwarde the thyrde for al hys great prowesse in victories ne myght all yet cõquere.

Certes I wote wel, ther shal be made more scorne & iape of me, that I so vnworthely clothed al togyther in the cloudy cloude of vncunnynge wyll paten me in pyers to speke of loue, or els of the causes in that matter, sythe al ꝑ grettest clerkes han had ynough to don, and as who sayth gathered vp clene tofore hem, and with theyr sharpe sithes of cunning al mowen and made therof greate rekes and noble, ful of al plentyes to fede me and many another. Envye forsothe cõmendeth noughte his reason, that he hath in hain, be it neuer so trusty. And al though these noble repers, as good workemen and worthy theyr hyer, han al drawe and bounde vp in ꝑ sheues, & made many shockes, yet haue I ensample to gader the smale crõmes, and fullyn my waiet of tho that fallen from the borde amonge the smale houndes, notwythstandynge the trauayle of the almoygner, that hath draw vp in ꝑ cloth al the remyssayles, as trenchours, and the resyef to here to the almesse. Yet also haue I leue of the noble husbande Boece, al though I be a straunger of connynge to come after his doctrine, and these great workmen, and glene my handfuls of the shedynge after theyr handes, & if me fayle ought of my ful, to encrease my porcion with that I shal drawe by priuytyes out of shockes, a sly seruaunte in hys owne helpe is often moch cõmended, knowyng of trouth in causes of thinges, was more hardyer in the first sechers, and so sayth Arystotle, & lyghter in vs that han folowed after. For their passyng study han freshed our wittes, and oure vnderstandynge han exyted in consideracion of trouth by sharpnes of their reasons. Utterly these thinges be no dremes ne iapes, to throwe to hogges, it is lykelych meate for chyldren of trouth, and as they me betyden wh̃ I pilgrymaged out of my kith in wynter, whan the wether out of measure was boystous, & the wyld winde Borias as his kind asketh with dryenge colde, maked the wawes of ꝑ occian see so to aryse vnkyndely ouer the commune bankes that it was in poynt to spyll all the erthe.

¶ Thus endeth the prologue, and here after folowyth the fyrst boke of the Testament of Loue.

ALas Fortune alas, I ỳ some tyme in delycyous houres was wont to enioy blyssful stoundes, am nowe dryue by vnhappy heynesse to bewaile my sondrye yuels in tene.

Trewlye I leue, in myn herte is writte of perdurable letters all the entencyons of lamẽtacion ỳ now ben ynempned, for any maner disease outwarde in sobbyng maner, sheweth sorowful pezynge frõ within. Thus frõ my cõfort I ginne to spille, syth she that shulde me solace, is ferre fro my presence. Certes her absence is to me an hell, my sterynge deth thus in wo it myneth, that endelesse care is throughout myne herte clenched, blysse of my ioye, that ofte me murthed is turned into galle, to thynke on thyng that may not at my wyll in armes me hent. Myrth is chaunged in to tene, whan swinke is there contynually, that rest was wont to solourne and haue dwellynge place. Thus wytlesse thoughtful, syghtlesse lokynge, I endure my penaunce in this derke prysone, caytyued fro frendshippe and acquayntaunce, and forsaken of al that any word dare speke. Straũge hath by way of intrucyoun made hys home, there me shulde be, yf reason were herd as he shuld. Neuer ỳ later yet herely lady precious Margarit, haue mynde on thy seruaunt, and thinke on his disease, how lightles he liueth, sithe the beames brẽnende in loue of thin eien arn so bewet, that worldes a cloude atwene vs twey wol not suffre my thoughtes of hem to be enlumyned. Thynke that one vertue of a Margarite precious is amonges many other the sorowful to cõforte yet wyll of that me sorowful to comforte is my luste to haue nought elis at this tyme, dede ne derke, ne no maner traueyle hath no power myne hert so moche to fade, as shulde to here of a twinckelynge in your disease. Ah, God forbede that, but yet lette me dey, let me sterue withouten any measure of penaunce, rather than myne herte ryly thinking comforte in ought were diseased. What maye my seruice aueyle in absence of her, that my seruice shuld accepte-is this nat endelesse sorowe to thynke-Yes, yes god wote, myne hert breaketh nygh a sonder howe shuld the groũd without kyndly noryture bringen forthe any frutes: how shulde a shippe withouten a sterne in the gret see be gouerned. Howe shulde I wythouten my blysse, my herte, my desyre, my ioye, my goodnesse, endure in this contrarious prison, that thynke euery hour in the day an hundred winter. Wel may me ne Eue sayne to me Adam, in sorowe fallen from welth, dryuen arte thou out of paradise, with sweate thy sustenaũce to be swynke. Depe in thys pynynge pyne with wo I lygge ystorked, with chaynes lyked of care, & of tene. It is so hye from thens I lye and the cõmune erth, ther ne is cable in no lande maked, that myght stretche to me to drawe me in to blysse, ne steyers to stey on is none, so that without recouer endeles here to endure I wotte wel I purueyde. O, where arte thou now frendshippe, that somtyme with laughande chere, madest bothe face and cõtenaũce to me wardes-truely now arte thou went out of towne, but euer me thynketh he weareth his olde clothes, & that ỳ soule in ỳ whiche the lyfe of frendshippe was in, is drawen out from his other spirites. Nowe than farewel frendshyp, and farewel felawes, me thynketh ye al han taken your leaue: no force of you al at ones. But lady of loue ye wote what I mene, yet thinke on thy seruaũt, that for thy loue spylleth, all thinges haue I forsake to folowen thyn hestes: rewarde me with a thought, though ye do naught elis. Remembraunce of loue lythe so sore vnder my brest, that other thought cometh not in my mynde, but gladnesse to thynke on youre goodnesse and your mery chere, frendes and sorowe to thynke on youre wreche and youre daunger, from whiche Cryste me saue. My great ioye it is to haue in meditacions the bounties, the vertues, the nobley in you prynted: sorowe and hell comen at ones, to suppose that I be beyned. Thus with care, sorow, and tene am I shapte myn ende with deth to make. Now good goodly thynke on thys. O wretched foole that I am fallen in to so lowe, ỳ heate of my brenning tene hath me al defased: how shulde ye lady sette prise on so foule fythe. My connynge is thynne, my voyce is exiled, lyke to a foole naturel am I comparyssoned. Trewly lady but your mercy the more were, I wote wel al my labour were in ydel: your mercy than passeth right. God graunte that proposycion to be verifyed in me, so that by truste of good hope, I nowe come to the hauen of ease, and sythe it is impossible, the colours

lours of your qualyties to chaunge: and for-
the I wote wel wemme ne spotte may not
abyde, there so noble vertue haboundeth, so
that the defasyng to you is verily ymagyna-
ble, as countenaunce of goodnesse with encre
synge vertue, is so in you knytte to abyde by
necessary maner, yet if the ryuers myght fall,
whiche is ayenst kynde, I wol wel myn hert
ne shulde therefore naughte flytte by the lesse
poynt of gemetrye, so sadly is it sonded, that
away from your seruyce in loue maye he not
departe. O loue, whan shall I bene pleased?
O charite, whan shal I bene eased? O good
goodly, whan shall the dyce turne? O full of
vertue do the chaunce of comforte vpwarde
to fal. O loue, whan wolt thou thinke on thy
seruaunt? I can no more but here out cast of
al welfare, abyde the daye of my dethe, or els
to se the lyght that myght al my wellyng so-
rowes voyde, and of the flod make an ebbe.
These diseases mowen well by dureffe of so-
rowe, make my lyfe to vnbodye, and so for to
dye: but certes ye lady in a full perfection of
loue ben so knytte wyth my soule, that deth
may not thilk knotte vnbynde ne departe, so
that ye and my soule togyther is endeleffe, in
blysse shulde dwel, and there shal my soule at
the full ben eased, that he may haue your pre-
sence to shewe thentet of his desyres: Ah dere
god, that shalbe a great ioye. Nowe erthelye
goddesse take regarde of thy seruaũt, though
I be feble, for thou arte wonte to prayse thẽ
better, that wold conne serue in loue, al be he
full mener than kynges or princes, that wol
not haue that vertue in mynde. Nowe pre-
cious Margarite, that with thy noble vertue
hast drawen me in to loue firste, me wenynge
therof to haue blysse, as galle & aloes are so
moch sprynge, that sauour of swetnes maye
I not arafte. Alas that your benigne eyen, in
whiche that mercy semeth to haue al his nor-
ture, nyl by no waye tourne the clerenesse of
mercy to mewardes. Alas that youre bren-
nande vertues, shynynge amonges all folke,
and enlumynynge al other people by habun-
daũce of encrefsig, sheweth to me but smoke
and no light. These thinges to thinke in myn
hert maketh euery day weppyng in myn eyen
to renne. These lyggen on my backe so sore,
that vnportable burthen me semeth on me
back to be charged, it maketh me backward
to meue, whan my steppes by comune course
euen forthe pretende: These thynges also on
right side and lyft, haue me so enuolued with
care, that wãhope of helpe is thrꝰghout me
ronne, trewlye and leue that graceleffe is my
fortune, which that euer sheweth it mewar-
des by a cloudy diseafe, al redy to make sto-
mes of rene, and the blyffful syde halte styll a-
wayward, & wol it not suffre to mewardes
to turne: no force, yet wol I not bẽ cõquered.

O, alas that your nobley so moche amonge
all other creatures cõmended by folowynge
streme by al maner vertues, but ther bẽ won-
derful, I not which that let the flode to come
in to my soule, wherefore purely mated with
sorowe thorough sought, my selfe I crye on
youre goodneffe to haue pyte on this caytife,
that in the inreft degre of sorow and diseafe
is left, & without your goodly wyl from any
helpe and recouery. These sorowes maye I
not sustene, but if my sorowe shulde be tolde
and to you wardes shewed, although moche
space is betweue vs twayne, yet me thinketh
that by suche soleynynge wordes, my diseafe
gynneth ebbe. Trewly me thynketh that the
sowne of my lamentacyous weping is right
nowe flowe in to your presence, & there crieth
after mercy & grace, to which thig me semeth
the lift none answerte to yeue, but with a dey-
nous chere ye cõmaũden it to auoyd, but god
forbyd that any worde shuld of you spring to
haue so litel routh. Warde pite & mercy in eue
ry Margarite is closed by kynd amõges ma
ny other vertues, by qualites of comfort, but
comfort is to me right naught worthe, with-
outen mercy and pyte of you alone, whyche
thinges hastely god me graũt for his mercy.

RHersynge these thynges and manye o-
ther, without tyme or moment of rest me
semed for anguysshe of diseafe, that al toge-
der I was ranyssked, I can not tell howe,
but holly al my passyons and felinges weren
lost, as it semed for the tyme, and sodaynly a
maner of drede light in me al at ones; nought
suche frate as folke haue of an enemye that
were myghty, and wolde hem greue or dere
hem diseafe: for I trowe this is wel knowe
to many persones, that otherwhile yf a man
be in hys soueraygnes presence, a maner of
ferdneffe creepeth in his hert, not for harme,
but of goodly subiection: namely as men re-
den that aungels ben afrede of our sauyour
in heuen. And parde there ne is, ne maye no
passyon of diseafe be, but it is to meane that
aungels ben adradde, not by frendes of drede,

sythen they ben perfytely blyssed, as affectiō of wonder tuinesse is by seruyce of obeyssence, such ferde also hā these louers in presence of theyr loues, and subiectes afore theyr loueraynes: Right so with ferdenesse myn herte was caught. And I sodaynly astonyed, there entred in to the place there I was lodged a lady, the semelych and moste goodly to my syght, that euer to fore apered to any creature, and trewlye in the blustrynge of her looke, she yaue gladnesse and comforte sodaynely to all my wyttes, and ryghte so she dothe to euery wyght that cometh in her presence. And for she was so goodlye (as me thought) myne herte beganne somedele to be enbolded, and we xre a lytell hardy to speake, but yet with a quakynge voyce, as I durste, I salued her, and enquired what she was, and why she so worthye to fyghte, dayned to entre in to so foule a dongeon, and namely a prisson, wythout leaue of my keperes. For certes all thoughe the vertue of dedes of mercy stretchen to bysytten the poore prisoners, and hem after that faculties ben had to comfort, me semed that I was so ferre fallen into mysserye and wretched hyd caytifnesse, that me shulde no precyous thynge neyghe: and also that for my sorowe euerye wyght shuld ben heāuy, and wysshe my recouery. But whan this lady had sōdele apperceiued, as well by my wordes as by my chere, what thought bessyed me within, with a good womanly countenaunce she sayde these wordes.

O my nory, wenyst thou that my maner be, to forget my frendes or my seruaunces naye (quod she) it is my full entente to bysyte and comforte all my frensshippes and alyes, as well in tyme of perturbation, as of mooste properye of blysse, in me shall vnkyndnesse neuer be founden. And also sythen I haue so fewe especyall trewe now in these dayes, wherfore I maye well at more leysar come to hem that me deserueu, and yf my cōmynge maye in any thynge auayle, were wel I wol come ofren

Nowe good lady (quod I) that art so fayre on to loke, reynynge bonnye by thy wordes, blysse of paradise arn thy lokynges, ioye and comforte are thy monynges. What is thy name, howe is it that in you is so mokel wer kynge vertues enpight, as me semeth, and in none other creature yt euer sawe I with myn eyen? My disciple (quod she) me wondreth of thy wordes and on the, ꝑ for a lytel disease hast forgeten my name. Wolde thou not wel that I am Loue, that first the brought to thy seruyce? O good ladye (qō I) is thys worshippe to the or to thyn excellence for to come in to so foule a place? Parde somtyme tho I was in prosperite and with forayne goodes enuolued, I had mokyll to done to draw the to myne hostel, & yet many couenynges thou madest er thou lyste fullye to graunte, thyne home to make at my dwellynge place: & now thou comest goodlye by thine owne vyse, to comforte me with wordes, and so there thoroughe I gynne remembre on passed gladnesse. Trewly lady I ne wotte whether I shal say welcome or none, sythen thy coming wol as mocke do me tene and sorow, as gladnesse and myrthe: se n. /. For that me comforteth to thinne on passed gladnesse, that me anoyeth efte to be in doynge. Thus thy cōmynge both gladdeth and teneth, and that is cause of mocke sorowe: Lo ladye, howe than I am comforted by your cōmynge, and with that I gan in terres to distylle, and tenderly wepe. Nowe certes (quod Loue) I se wel (and that me ouerthynketh) that wytte in the fayleth and arte in poynte to dote.

Trewly (quod I) that haue yt maked, and that euer wol I rue. Wotest thou not well (quod she) that euery shepherde ought by reson to seke hys sperkelande shepe that arne ronne in to wylderneesse, amonge bus hes and perylis, and hem to theyr pasture ayen bryng, and take of hem ryght besy cure on keppynge: and tho the vncommynge shepe scattered wold ben losse, rennyng to wylderneesse, and to beestes drawe, or els wolden put hem selfe to the swalowing wolfe, yet shall ꝑ shepeherde by busyneesse and trauayle so put hem forthe, that he shal not let hym be losse by no waye. A good shepeherd putteth rather his lyfe to ben losse for hys shepe. But for thou shalte not wene me beyng of werse condicion, trewly for euerych of my folke, and for al tho that to me warde be knyt in any condicyon, I wol rather dye than suffre hem throughe tout to ben spylte. For me lyste, and it me lyketh, al al myn a shepherdesse to be cleped. Wolt thou not wel I fayled neuer wight, but he me refused, & wolde negligently go with vnkyndeneesse: and yet parde haue I many such holpe and relieued, and they haue ofte me begyled, but euer at the ende it discēdeth in their owne

nekes.

nerbes. Hast thou not radde howe kynde Ie was to Paris, Priamus sone of Troy. How Iason me failed for al his false behest. howe Medars sende, I ielosie for no tene tyl he was troned in my bysse for his seruyce. What (quod he) moste of all, maked I ... at a soudaye by-twene god and mankynde, and there a maide to be nompere, to put the quarel at ende. Lo, howe I haue trauayled to haue thanke on al sydes, & yet lyst me not to rest, & I mizt finde on home I shulde werche. But trewly myne owne disciple, bycause I haue the founde at al assayes in thy wyl to be redy myn hestes to haue folowed, & hast ben trewe to that Margaryte perle, that ones I the shewed, and the slawye ayenwarde hath made but daungerous chere, I am come in proper perso to put the out of errours, and make the gladde by wayes of reson, so that sorow ne distrase shall no moze herafter the amaistry. Wherthrough I hope thou shalt lyghtly come to the grace, that thou longe hast desyred, of thylke Iewel. Hast thou not herde many ensamples, howe I haue comforted & releued the scholers of my lore. who hathe worthyed kynges in the feld. Who hath honoured ladies in boure by a perpetuel myrrour of their truth in my seruice. Who hath caused worthy folke to voidder and shame. Who hath holde eyres and traines in prosperite. yf the lyst clepe ayen thyn olde remembraunce, thou coudest euery poynte of this declare in especiall, and saye yt I thy maystres haue be cause, causyng these thynges and many mo other. Nowe iwys madame (quod I) all these thinges I knowe well my selfe, and that thyn excellēce passeth the vnderstandyng of vs berthes, and that no manes wytte erthly may compze hende thy vertues. Wel than (quod she) for I se the in distrase and sorowe, I wot wel thou arte one of myne norryes, I maye not suffre the so to make sorowe, thyn own selfe to shende: but I my selfe come to be thy fere, thin heuy charge to make to seme the lesse, for wo is hym that is a loue: And to the sorye to ben moued by a sorowful wizt it is great gladnesse. Right so with my syche frendes I am syche, and wyth sory I can not eis but sorowe make, til whā I haue hem releued, in suche wise that gladnesse in a maner of counterpaylynge shall restore as moche in ioye as the passed heuynesse byforne dyd in tene. And also (qō she) whan any of my seruauntes ben a lone in soreyne place, I haue yet euer beseyed me to be wyth hem, in comforte of their hertes, and taughte hem to make songes of playnte and of blysse, and to endyten letters of rethorike in queynt vnderstondynges, & to bethinke hem in what wyse they might best their ladies in good seruyce praise, and also to lerne maner in cōtenaūce, in wordes, & in bearing, & to ben meke & lowly to euery wight, his name & fame to encreasse, & to yeue great yeftes & large, ỹ his renome maye spryngen, but therof haue I excused for thy losse and thy greate costages, wherthrough thou arte nedye, arne nothynge to me vnknowen, but I hope to god sonryme it shall ben amended, as thus as I sayd. In norriture haue I taught al myne, and in curtesye made hem expert their ladies hertes to winne, and if any wolde endeymous or proud or be enuyous, or of wretches acquein taunce, hastelyche haue suche voyded oute of my schole: for all vyces trewly I hate: vertues and worthynesse in all my power I auaunce. Ah worthy creature (quod I) and by iuste cause the name of goddes dignely ye mowe beare: In the lythe the grace thorough whiche any creature in this world hath anye goodnesse, trewly al maner of blysse and preciousnesse in vertue out of the springen, and welles, as brokes and ryuers proceden from their springes, & lyke as all waters by kinde drawen to the see, so al kindely thynges thresten by ful appetyte of desyre to drawe after thy steppes, and to thy presēce approche, as to their kyndely perfectiō: How dare than bestes in thys worlde aughte forfete ayenst thy deuyne purueyaunce. Also lady ye knowen al the priuy thoughtes, in hertes no counsaile maye ben hydde from your knowing. Wherfore I wote wel lady that ye know your selfe that I in my conscience am and haue ben wyllynge to your seruyce, al coude I neuer do as I shulde, yet forsothe fayned I neuer to loue otherwyse than was in myne herte: and yf I coude haue made chere to one, and ythought another, as manye other doone aldaye afore myn eyen, I trowe it wolde not me haue bayled. Certes (quod she) haddest thou so doone, I wolde not nowe haue the here desyred. Ye were wel lady eke (quod I) that I haue not playde tabet, nerfyl in, docke out, and with ỹ werthercroke waned, & trewely there ye me setter, by acorde of my conscience, I wold not sore, fyl ye and reason by aperte strength ma-

den myne herte to toume. In good faythe (quod she) I haue knowe the euer of tho condycions, and sythen thou woldest (in as much as in the was) a made me pryuy of thy counsayle, and iuge of thy conscience, though I forsoke it in tho daies, til I saw better my time, wolde neuer god that I shuld nowe faile, but euer I wol be redy wytnessynge thy soth, in what place that euer I shall, ayenst all tho ỳ wol the contrary susteyne: And for as moche as to me is naught vnknowen ne hyd of thy pryuy hert, but al hast thou tho thinges made to me open at the ful, that hath caused my comynge in to this pryson to holde the webbes of thyne eyen, to make the clerely to se the errours thou hast ben in, and bycause that men ben of dyuers condycyons, some a dradde to saye a sothe, and some for a sothe anone redy to fyghte, and also that I maye not my selfe ben in place to withsay thilke mē that of the speken, otherwise than the sothe, I woll and I charge the in vertue of obedyence, ỳ thou to me owest, to wryten my wordes, and sette hem in writynges ỳ they mowe as my wytnessynge ben noted amonge the people. For bookes wrytten neyther dreden ne shamen, ne stryue comme, but onely shewen the entent of the writer, and yeue remembraunce to the herer: and if any woll in thy presence saye anye thynge to tho writers, loke boldely, truste on Mars to answere at ỳ ful. For certes I shall him enfourme of all the trouthe in thy loue, with thy conscience, so that of his helpe thou shalte not barye at thy nede. I trow the strōgest and the best that may be found, wol not transuers thy wordes, whereof than woldest thou drede.

GReetly was I tho gladed of these wordes, as as who saith werē somdele lyght in hert, both for the auctorite of wytnes, and also for sykernesse of helpe of the forsayd herber, and said. Truely lady nowe am I wel gladded through comfort of your wordes: be it nowe lykynge vnto youre nobley to shewe whiche folke diffame youre seruauntes, sythe your seruice ought aboue al other thinges to ben commended. Yet (quod she) I se wel thy soule is not al out of the amased cloude: the more better to here thyng that ỳ myght light out of thyn heuy charge, and after knowyng al thyne owne helpe, thā to stryue swete wordes, a such reasons to here: for in a thoughtful soule (and namely suche one as thou arte) woll not yet suche thynges synken. Come of therfore and let me sen thy heuy charge, that I may the lightlyer for thy comforte puruey.

Nowe certes lady, quod I, the moste comfort I myght haue, were vtterly to wete me be sure in hertes of that Margaryte I serue, and so I thynke to don th all mightes whyle my lyfe dureth. Than (qō she) mayste thou therafter, in suche wyse that myspleasaunce ne entre. In good fayth (quod I) there shal no mispleasaunce be caused thrōuz trespace on my syde. And I do the to wetten (quod she) I set neuer yet perfō to serue in no place (but yf he caused the cōtrari in defautes and trespaces) that he ne spedde of hys seruyce. Myn owne erthly lady (quod I tho) and yet remembre to your worthynesse howe long sythen by many reuglynge of yeres, in tyme whan Octobre his leaue gynneth take, & Nouēbre sheweth hym to sight, whan betnes ben ful of goodes as is the nutte on euery halke, and than good londe tylers gynneth shape for the earth, th great trauayle to bringe forth more corne to manues sustenaunce, ayenste the nexte yeres folowyng. In suche tyme of plentye, he that hath an home, and is wyse, lyste not to wander meruayles to seche, but he de cōstrayned or excited: oft the lothe thyng is done by excitacion of other manues opynyon, whyche wolden fayne haue myne abydynge, take in herte of luste to trauayle and se the windyng of the erthe in that tyme of wynter, by woodes that large stretes werne in, by smale pathes that swyne and hogges hadde made, as lanes with ladels their maste to seche, I walked thynkynge alone a wonder great while, and the great beestes that the woode haunte and adozneth all maner fozestes, and heerdes gone to wylde: than er I was ware I neyghed to a see banke, and for ferde of the beestes shyppe I cryde: For lady I trow ye were well your selfe nothyng is werse than ỳ beestes that shulden ben taune, yf they catche her wyldenesse, and gynne againe waxe ramage: thus forsothe was I a ferde, and to shyp me hyed. Than were there ynowe to lache myne handes and drawe me to shyppe, of whiche many I knewe wel the names. Syght was the first, lust was a nother, thoughte was the thirde, and wyl eke was there a master: these brought en me within bord of this shyppe of trauayle. So whan the sayle was spzad and

thys

this shippe gan to moue, the wynde and wa-
ter gan for to ryse, & ouerthwartly to tourne
the welken, the wawes semeden as they kist
togyder, but often vnder colour of kyssynge
is mokyll olde hate pryuely closed and kepte.
The storme so straungely and in a deuouryng
maner gan so faste vs assayle, that I suppo-
sed the date of my deth shuld haue made there
hys gyrnynge, nowe vp nowe downe, nowe
vnder the wawe and nowe abouen was my
shyppe a great whyle. And so by mokel du-
resse of wethers & of stormes, and with great
knowing pylgrimages I was dryuen to an
yle, wher vtterly I wende fyrst to haue be rest-
awed, but trewly as the first gynnyng, it se-
med me so perylous the hauen to catche, that
but thorowe grace I had ben comforted, of
lyfe I was full dispayred. Trewly lady yf ye
remembre a ryght of al maner thynges, your
selfe came hastely to sene vs see dryuen, and to
weten what we weren: but first ye were dey-
nous of chere, after which ye gonne better a-
lyght, & euer as me thought ye lyued in great
drede of disease, it semed so by your chere. And
whan I was certified of youre name, the len-
ger I loked in you, the more I you goodlye
dradde, and euer myn hert on you opened the
more, and so in a lytell tyme my shyppe was
out of mynde. But lady as ye me lad I was
ware bothe of brestes and of fyshes a great
nombre thronging to gyder: amonge whiche
a muskel in a blewe shel had enclosed a Mar-
garite perle, the moste precious and best that
euer to forne came in my sight, and ye tolden
your self that syke iewel in hys kynde was so
good and so vertuous, that her better shulde
I neuer fynde, all sought I therafter to the
worldes ende, & with that I helde my peace
a great whyle: and euer sythen I haue me be
thought on the man that sought the precious
Margarites, and whan he had founden one
to his lyking, he solde al his good to bye that
iewel: I wis thought I and yet so I thynke,
nowe haue I founden the iewell, that myne
hert desyreth, wherto shulde I seche further,
trewly nowe wot I fynde, and on this Mar
garite I sette me for euer. Nowe than also
sythen I wyste wel it was youre wyl that I
shulde so suche a seruyce me take, and so to de
syre ꝑ thynge, of whiche I neuer haue blysse,
there lyueth none, but he hathe disease: your
might than that brought me to such seruyce,
that to me is cause of sorowe and of ioye, I
wonder of your word that ye sayn, to bringen
men in to ioy, and parde ye wote wel that de-
faute ne trespace may not resonable ben put
to me wardes, as ferre as my conscience kno-
weth: But of my disease me lyst now a whyle
to speke, & to informe you in what maner of
blysse ye haue me throng. For trewly I wene
that al gladnesse, al ioye, and al myrthe is be-
shet vnder locke, and the key thorowe in suche
place that it may not be founde: my brenning
who hath altred al my hewe. Whan I shulde
slepe, I walowe & I thinke, and me dispayre.
Thus combred, I seme that al folke had me
mased. Also lady myne, desyre hath longe du-
red, some speking to haue, or els at ꝑ lest haue
ben enmoysed with syght: and for wantynge
of these thinges, my mouth wolde & he durst,
pleyne right sore, sythen yuels for my good-
nesse arne manyfolde to me holden. I won-
der lady truely, saue euermore your reuerēce,
howe ye nowe for shame such thinges suffre
on your seruaunt to be so multiplyed: Wher-
fore knelyng with a lowe hert I pray you to
rue on this caytife, that of nothing now may
serue. Good lady if you lyst nowe your helpe
to me shewe, that am of your priuyest seruan-
tes at al assayes in this time, and vnder your
winges of protectiō. No helpe to mewardes
is shapen, howe shal than straungers in anye
wyse after succour looke, whan I that am so
priuy, yet of helpe I do fayle. Further maye
I not, but thus in thys prison abyde: what
bondes and chaynes me holde, lady ye se wel
your selfe. I renyant forynged hath not halfe
the care. But thus syghyng and sobbynge I
wayle here alone, and nere it for comforte of
your presence, right here wolde I sterue. And
yet a lytel am I gladded, that so goodly such
grace and none hap haue I hente, gracyously
to finde the precious Margarite, that al other
left men shulde bye, if they shulde therfore sel
al her substaunce. Wo is me that so many let
games and purpose brekers ben maked wai-
ters, suche prisoners as I am euermore to o-
uerloke and to hynder, and for such letteurs
it is harde any such iewel to wynne. Is this
lady an honour to thy deytie me thynketh by
right, suche people shulde haue no maystrye,
ne ben ouerlokers ouer none of thy seruaun-
tes. Trewly were it leful vnto you, to all the
goddes wolde I playne, that ye rule your de-
mine puruelaunce amonges your seruauntes
nothynge as ye shulde. Also lady my mo-

is insufficiaunt to counterwayle ꝑ price of thys iewel, or els to make therthinge: ellis no wight is worthy suche perles to weare, but kynges or princes, or els their peers: this iewel for vertue wolde aboue a make fayre al a realme, ꝑ nobley of vertue is so muche ꝑ her goodnesse ouer al is cõmended. Who is it that wold not wayle but he might suche ryches haue at hys wyl, the vertue therof out of this prison may me delyuer, & nought els. And if I be not therfor now holpen, I se my selfe without recouery: although I might here boyde, yet wold I not, I wolde abyde the daye that destenye hath me ordeyned, which I suppose is without amendement, so sore is myne herte bounden, that I maye thynken none other. Thus frayre (lady) hathe sir Daunger laced me in stockes, I leue it be not your wil: and for I se you taken so lytel hede, as me thynketh, and wol not maken by youre myght the vertue in mercy of ꝑ Margaryte on me for to stretche, so as ye mowe wel, in case that you lyste: my blysse and my myrthe arne feide, sickernesse & sorowe ben alwaye redy, the cope of erne is wounde aboute al my body, that stonding is me best, vnneth maye I lyngre for pure mysraly sorowe, and yet al this is lytel ynoughe to be ꝑ ernest syner, in forwarde of this bargayne, for treble foide, so mokel must I suffer, er tyme come of myne ease. For he is worthy no welthe, that maye no wo suffer. And certes I am heuy to thinke on these thinges, but who shal yeue me water ynough to drinke lest myn eyen drie for renning stremes of teares? Who shall waylen with me myne owne happy yeuynesse? Who shal counsayle me now in my lykynge tene, and in my goodly harme? I not. For euer ꝑ more I brenne, the more I coueyte: the more that I sorow, ꝑ more thrist I in gladnesse. Who shal than yeue me a contrarious drinke, to staunche the thrust of my blysful bytternesse? Lo thus I brenne and I drenche, I shyuer and sweate, to this reuersed yuel was neuer yet ordeyned salue, for soth al liches ben vnconning, saue the Pagaryte alone, any suche remedy to purury.

And with these wordes I brast out to wepe, that euery teare of myne eyen for greatnesse semed they borin out the bal of my sight, and that al the water hadde ben out ronne. Than thought me, that loue gan a litel to heauy for mistromfort of my cheere, and gan soberly and in easy maner speke, well auysinge what he sayde. Comenly the wyse speken easyliest and softe for many skyles: One is, their wordes are the better beleued, and also in easy speakynge, auysement men maye catche, what to put forthe, and what to holden in. And also the auctorite of suche wordes is the more, ellis they yeuen the more hederlandynge to other inclination of the mater. Right so thys ladye easily and in a softe maner gan say their wordes. Verayly (quod she) great it is, that by no maner of semblaunt, as ferre as I can espye, thou lyst not to haue any retour, but euer thou playnest & sorowest, & wayest of remedye for foolyshe wylfulnesse the lyte not to seche: but enquire of thy next frendes, that is thyne auoyre, and me that haue ben thy maystresse and thy cour and lyne of thy disease, for of disease is gladnesse and ioye, as a ful wesel soberd, that is quencheth the fyrynge of the fyrste ernes. But thou that were woone not onely these thynges remembre in thyne herte, but also fooles therof to enfourmen, in abnullynge of their errours, and destroyeng of their herde opynions, and in comfort of their frate thoughtes nowtauntthou not ben comforte of thyn owne soule: in thynkynge of these thynges. O where hastou be so longe cõtinual, that hast so mykel ernes of the potages of forgetfulnesse, and dronken so of ignorance, that the oblyuyng which thou haddest of me, arne a maystred and lost fro al maner of knowynge? O this is a worthy person to helpe other, that can not counsayle hym selfe. And with these wordes for pure and stronge shame I wexe al red. And she than seyng me so astonyed by dyuers stoundes, sodainly (whiche thynge kynde hath) gan deliciously me comfort with sugred wordes, puttyng me in ful hope that I shuld the Pagarite gette, if I folowed her best, and gan with a fayre clothe to wypen the teares that hyngen on my chekes: and than sayd I in this wyse. Nowr wel of wysdome and of al welthe, without the may nothing ben lerned, thou bearest the keyes of al priuy thinges. In dayne trauayle men to catche any sterdyng, but if ye lady first the locke vnspet, ye lady leme vs the waies and the bypathes to heuen: ye lady make al the heuenly bodyes goodly and benigneli to done her course, that gouernen vs berthes here on erthe. Ye armes your seruauntes ayenst al debates, with im-

perciable

preciable hatreys, ye setten in her hertes insu
rable blode of hardenesse, ye leaden hem to
the parfyte good. Yet all thynge desireth, ye
wern no man of helpe þ̄ weie done your loze,
graunte me nowe a lytel of your grace, al my
sorowes to crase. Myne owne seruaunt (qō
she) trewly thou syttest myn herte, & thy
badde chere gan sozely me greue: but amōge
thy playnyng wo. s me thought thou alle-
gest thynges to be lettinge of thyne helpyng,
and thy grace to hynder, wherthrought me
thynketh that wāhope is crept through thyn
hert: God forbyd that ryse vnthrifty thought
shulde come in thy mynde thy wittes to trou
ble, sythen euery thyng in comming is contin-
gent, wherfore make no more thy proposiciō
by an impossible. Yet nowe I praye the re-
herse me ayen tho thynges, that thy mistrust
causen, and thrike thinges I thynke by rea-
son to distroyen, & put ful hope in thyn herte
What understandest thou there (quod she) by
that thou saydest, many let games are thyn
ouerlokers. And also by that thy moeble is
infaillant, I not what thou therof meanest.

Trewly (qō I) by the fyrst, I say that lan-
gers euermore arne spekynge rather of euyl
than of good, for euery age of man rather en-
clyneth to wickednesse, than any goodnesse to
maynre. Also false wordes sprongen so wyde,
by the herynge of false lyeng tonges, that
fame als swyftly flyeth to her eares, & saythe
many wicked tales, and as soone shal false-
nesse ben leued as trouth, for al his gret soth-
nesse. Nowe by that other (qō I) me thynketh
thilke iewel so precious, that to no such wrete
che as I am, wolde herne therof extende, &
also I am to feble in worldely ioyes, any such
iewel to contreuayle. For suche people that
worldly ioyes han at her wyl, ben sette at the
highest degre, and most in reuerence ben ac-
cepted, for false wening maketh felicite ther
in to be supposed: but such caytiues as I am
euermore ben hyndred. Certes (qō she) take
good kede & I shal by reason to the shewen, þ̄
al these thynges mow nat let thy purpose, by
the left poynt that any wight coude pricke.

REmembrest nat (quod she) ensample is
one of the strōgest maner, as for to preue
a mannes purpose. Thanne yf I nowe by
ensample enduce the to any propositcion, is it
nat proued by strength. Yes forsothe (qō I)
Wel (qō she) raddest thou neuer howe Paris
of Troye and Heleyne loued togyder, and yet
had they not entrecomuned of speche. Also
Acrisius shette Dane his doughter in a tour,
for suerte that no wyght shulde of her haue
no maystry in my seruyce, and yet Jupiter by
signes without any speche had al his purpose
ayenst her fathers wyl. And many suche mo
haue ben knitte in trouthe and yet spake they
neuer togyder, for that is a thyng enclosed vn
der secretnes of priuite, why twey persōs en-
tremellen hertes after a syght. The power in
knowyng of such thynges so preuen, shal nat
al vtterly be peuen to you bresses, for manye
thinges in such precious matters, bē reserued
to iugement of deuine purueyaūce, for amōg
lyuing people, by mannes consideracio moun
they not be determyned. Wherfore I saye, al
the enuy, al the langlynge, that weiny people
vpon my seruaunces maken eft, is rather cau
se of esployte than of any hyndrynge. Why
than (qō I) suffre ye suche wrong, and moun
whan ye lyst, lightly al suche purls abate, me
semeth to you it is a great vnwurshyp. O (qō
she) holde now thy peace, I haue founden to
many that han ben to me vnkynde, that trew-
ly I woll suffre euery wight in þ̄ wise to ha-
ue disease, & who that contynueth to the ende
wel and trewly, hem wol I helpen, & as for
one of myne in to blysse to wende, as martial
doyng in Grece. Who was yrowned, by god
nat the strongest, but he that rathest come &
lengest abode and continued in the iourney, &
spared nat to trauayle as longe as þ̄ playe lest.
But thilke persons þ̄ profred him now to my
seruyce therin is a whyle, & anon voydeth and
redy to another, & so nowe one he thynketh &
now another, and in to water entreth and a-
non respiteth, suche one lyst me nat in to per-
fite blisse of my seruice bring. A tree oft set in
diuers places wol not by kind endure to brig-
ge forth fruites. Loke nowe I pray the, how
myne olde seruauntes of tyme passed contyn-
ued in her seruyce, & folowe thou after their
steppes, and thanne myght thou not faile, in
case thou worche in this wyse. Certes (qō I)
it is nothing lych, this world to tyme passed,
eke this countrey hathe one maner, & another
countre hath another. And so may nat a man
alway put to his eye the salue that he healed
with his hele. For this is sothe, betwyxe two
thynges lyche, ofte diuersyte is required.
Nowe (qō she) that is sothe, diuersyte of na-
tion, diuersite of lawe, as was maked by ma
ny reasons,

by traisons, for that dyuersite cometh in by ꝑ contrarious malyce of wicked people, ꝑ han envyous hertes ayenst other. But trewly my law to my seruauntes euer hath ben ingeneral, whiche maye not fayle, for right as mannes lawes, ꝑ is ordayned by manye determinatiõs, may not be know for good or badde, tyl assay of ꝑ people han ꝓued it, & to what ende it drageth, & thã it sheweth the necessite therof, or els the impossibylyte. Ryght so the lawe of my seruaũtes so wel hath bẽ ꝓued in general, that hytherto hathe it not fayled. Wylte thou not wel that al the lawe of kynde is my lawe, and by god ordayned and stablisshed to dure by kynde reason, wherefore al law by mannes wytte purueyde, ought to be vnderputte to lawe of kynde, whiche yet hath be cõmune to euery kindely creature, that my statutes and my lawe that ben kyndely, arne general to al peoples. Olde doynges, and by many turnynges of yeres vsed, and with the peoples maner ꝓued, mowen not so lightly bẽ defased, but newe doynges contrarya untes suche olde, often causen diseases and breken many purposes. Yet saye I nat therfore, that ayen newe mischefe, men shulde not ordayne a newe remedye, but alwaye looke it contrary not the olde, no ferther than the nayre stretcheth. Than foloweth, it the olde doynges in loue han ben vniuersal, as for moste exployte for the vsed: Wherfore I wolde not yet that of my lawes nothynge be adnulled.

But thanne to thy purpose, suche iangelers and lookers, and wayters of games, yf the thynke in ought they mowe dere, yet loue wel alwaye, and sette hem at nought, and lette thy porte ben low in euery wyghtes presẽce, and redye in thyne herte to maynteyne that thou hast begonne, and a lytel the fayne with mekenesse in wordes, and thus with sleyght shalte thou surmount and dequare the yuel in their hertes. And wisdome yet is to seme slye otherwhyle there a manne wol fyght. Thus with suche thynges, the tonges of yuel shall ben stylled: els fully to graunte thy ful meanynge, forsothe euer was and euer it shal be, that myne enemies ben a ferde to trust to any fightinge: and therfore haue thou no cowardes herte in my seruyce, no more thanne somtyme thou haddest in the contrary, for if thou drede suche iangiers thy vyage to make: vnderstande wel that he that dredeth any rayne to sowe his corne, he shal haue thyn hernes. also he ꝑ is a ferde of his clothes, let hi dãce naked. Who nothing vndertaketh, a nameye in my seruyce, nothyng acheueth. After grete stormes ꝑ wether is often merry & sin oth. After moch clateryng, there is moky rowning: thus after iangling wordes cometh hushte, peace, & be styl. O good lady (quod I than) se nowe howe seuenyere passed & more, haue I grafted and groubed a bym, and with al the wayes that I coude I sought to a fed me of the grape, but fruite haue I non founde. Alla I haue this seuẽ yere serued Labã to a wedded Rachel his doughter, but blere eyed Lia is brought to my bedde, whiche alway engendreth my teme, and is full of chyldren in tribulacion & in care: and although the clippynges and kyssynges of Rachell shulde seme to me swete, yet is she so barayne, that gladnesse ne ioye by no way wol springe, so that I may wepe with Rachel, I may not ben counsayled with solace, sythen issue of myn hertely desire is fayled. Nowe than I pray that to me sone fredom & grace, in this eyght yere, this eighteth mowe to me berhe by kynerst and masseday after these seuẽ werke dayes of trauayle, to folow the christen lawe: & what euer ye do els, that thilke Margarite be holden so lady in your priuy chambre, that she in this caste to none other person be cõmitted. Loke than (quod she) in this caste to none other person be cõmitted: Looke than (qõ she) thou persuere in my seruice, in whiche I haue the grouñded, that thylke shorne in thy enemies mowe this on thy person be not sothed: lo this mã began to edifye, but for his foundemẽt is bad, to the ende maye he it nat bringe. For mekenesse in cõtenaunce, with a manly herte in dedes, & in longe cõtinuaunce, is the constance of my seruery, to al my retinue deliuered. What wenyst thou ꝑ me lyst ananence suche persons as louen the first sittinges at feestes, the highest stoles in churches & in hal, louynges of peoples in marketes and fayres, vnstedfaste to byde in one place any whyle togider, wenyng his owne wit more excellent than other, scorning al maner deuise but his owne: Nay nay god wot, these shul nothig parte of my blisse. Treuly my maner here tofore hath ben, worshyp with my blysse, Lyons in the felde, and lambes in chambre, Egles at assaute, & maydens in halle, foxes in counsayle, styll in their dedes, & their protectiõ is graũted redy to be a bridge, & their baner is arred like wolues i

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the felde. Thus by these wayes shul men ben maunced: ensample of Dauid ꝑ from keping of shepe, was drawen vp into the ordre of kyngly gouernaũce, and Jupiter from a bole to ben Europes fere, and Julius Cesar from the lowest degre in Rome, to be mayster of al erthly ꝓtes, and Eneas from hel, to be king of the countre there Rome is nowe stonding. And so to the J say, thy grace by beting thereafter, may set the in suche plight, that no tangling may greue the lest tucke of thy hemes, that are their tanghes, is nought to counte at a cresse in thy disauauntage.

Euer (quod she) hathe the people in thys worlde desired to haue had great name in worthinesse, & hated foule to here any fame, and that is one of the obiections thou alegest to be ayen thyn herely desyre. Ye forsothe (qõ J) and that so comenly the people wol lye, & bringe aboute suche enfame. Nowe (qõ she) yf men with leasynges put on the enfame, wenest thy selfe thereby ben enpeyred: that wening is wronge, se why, for as moche as they lyen thy merite encreaseth, and make the ben more worthy to hem that knowẽ of ꝑ the soth, by what thing thou art apeyred, ꝑ in so moky thou arte encreased of thy beloued frendes: and sothly a woũde of thy frende to the lasse harme, sir, and better than a false kyssynge in discreuable glosynge of thyn enemy, aboue that than to be wel with thy frend maketh suche enfame. Ergo thou art encreased and nat apeyred. Lady (qõ J) somtyme yet if a man be in disease, the estimacion of the enuious people ne loketh nothing to desertes of men, ne to the merytes of their doynges, but onely to the auenture of fortune, and thereafter they yeuen their sentence: And some loken the voluntary wyl in his herte, and thereafter telleth his iugement, not taking hede to reason ne to the qualyte of ꝑ doyng, as thus. If a man be ryche and fulfylde with worldly welfulnesse, some commenden it, and sayne it is so lente by iuste cause: and he that hath aduersyte, they sayne he is weaked, and hath deserued thylke anoye. The contrarye of these thynges some men holden also, and sayn that to the ryche ꝓsperite is puruayed in to hys confusyon, and vpon thys matter, many autorites of many and gret witted clerkes they alegen. And some men sayne, though al good ellymacion forsakẽ folke that han aduersyte yet is it meryte and encrease of hys blysse, so that these purposes arne so wonderful in vnderstandyng, that trewly for myne aduersite nowe J not howe the sentence of the indifferent people wyl iuge my fame. Therfore (quod she) if any wyght shulde yeue a trewe sentence on suche matters, the cause of the disease maist thou se wel, vnderstande therupon after what ende it draweth, that is to sayne good or bad, so ought it to haue his fame, or by goodnesse enfame by baddenesse: for euery reasonable person, and namely of a wise mã, his witte ought not without reason to forne herde, sodainly in a matter to iuge. After the sawes of ꝑ wise, thou shalt not iuge ne deme tofore thou knowe. Lady (quod J) ye remembre well that in moste laude and prayssyng of certayne saintes in holy churche, is to reherse en their conuersacion from badde in to good, & that is so rehersed, as by a perpetuall myrrour of remembraunce in worshippynge of tho sayntes, and good ensample to other misdoers in amendement. Nowe turned the Romayne credeores fro the Romaynes, to be with Hanibal ayenst hys kynde nacion: And afterwardes him seming ꝑ Romaynes to be at the next degre of confusyon, turned to hys olde alyes, by whose witte after was Hanybal discomfited. Wherfore to enfourme you lady the maner why J meane, se nowe in my youth J was drawe to ben assentaunt and in my mightes helping to certayn conturacions, and other great matters of ruling of citezins, and thilke thynges ben my drawers in, & exitours to tho matters werne so paynted & coloured, that at the prime face, me semed them noble and glorious to al the people: J than weninge mykell merite haue deserued in furtherynge and mayntenaunce of tho thynges, besyed and laboured with al my diligence, in werkyng of thylke matters to the ende. And trewlye lady to tell you the sothe, me rought lytel of any hate of the myghty senatours in thilke cite, ne of communes malyce, for two skylles: One was J had comforte to been in suche plyte, that both profite were to me and to my frendes. Another was for cõmen profyte in comunaltie is not but peace and tranquilite, with iust gouernaunce proceden from thylke profyte, sythen by counsayle of myne inwytte, me thought the first paynted thynges, malyce and euyll meanynge, withouten any good anaylynge to any people: and of ty-

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rampe purpoſed, and ſo for pure ſorowe and of my meddynge and badde infame that I was in towne, tho teares lafhed out of myne eyen, were thus away waſhe, thanne the bnder hydde malyce and the rancoure of purpoſynge enuye forneraſte and ymagyned, in diſtruction of moſyl people, ſhewed ſo openly, that had I ben blynde, with myne handes al the circumſtaunce I might wel haue feled.

Nowe than tho perſones that ſuche thynges haue caſte to redreſſe, for wrathe of my firſt meddlynge, chopen me to dwel in this pynande priſon, tyl Lachaſes my chylde no lenger wolde t wyne. And euer I was ſought, if me lyſt to haue grace of my lyfe, and freneſſe of that priſon, I ſhulde openly confeſſe howe peace might ben endufed to enden al the firſt rancours. It was fullye ſuppoſed my knowynge to be full in tho matters. Than lady I thought that euery man that by any waye of ryght, rightfully done, maye helpe any comune helpe to been ſaued, whiche thynge to kepe aboue al thynges I am holde to mayntayne, and namely in diſtroyeng of a wrong, al ſhulde I therthrough empeche myne owne fere, if he were gylty, and to do miſdede aſſrecaunte. And mayſter ne frende maye nought auayle to the ſoule of hym that in falſenesſe deyeth, and alſo that I nere deſyred wrath of the people, ne indignacyon of the worthy, for nothyng that euer I wrought or dyd, in any doyng my ſelfe eis, but in the mayntenaunce of theſe forſayd errours, and in hydynge of the pſuitres therof. And that al the peoples hertes holdynge on the errours ſyde, weren blynde and of elde ſo ferforthe begyled, that debate and ſtryfe they mayntayned, and in diſtruction on t hat otherſyde, by which cauſe the peace, that moſte in comunaltye ſhulde be deſired, was in poynte to be broken and adnulled. Alſo the cytye of London, that is to me ſo dere and ſwete, in whiche I was forth growen, and more kyndelye loue haue I to that place, than to any other inerthe, as euery kyndely creature hathe full appetyte to that place of hys kyndly engendrure, and to wilne reſte and peace in that ſtede to abyde: thylke peace ſhulde thus there haue ben broken, and of al wyſe it is commended and deſyred. For knowe thynge it is, al menne that deſyren to comen to the parfyte peace euerlaſtyng, muſt the peace by god cõmended, bothe mayntayn and kepe. Thys peace by angels voyce was confirmed, our god entrynge in this worlde. This as for his teſtament, he left to al his hides, whanne he retourned to the place frome whére he came: this his Apoſtel admoneſſeth to holden, without whiche man parfitly may haue none inſyght. Alſo thys god by hys comyng, made not peace alone betwene heuenly and erthly bodyes, but alſo amonge vs on erthe, ſo he peace confirmed, that in one herd of loue, one body we ſhulde perſourme. Alſo I remẽbre me wel how the name of Athenes was rather after the god of peace than of bataylle, therwynge that peace moſte is neceſſarye to comunalties and cytyes. I than ſo ſtyred by all theſe wayes toforne nempned, declared certayne poyntes in thys wiſe. Fyrſte that thylke perſons that hadden me drawen to their purpoſes, and I not witting the priuy entent of their meanynge, drawen alſo the feble wytted people, that haue none inſight of gubernatyfe prudence, to clamure and to crye on matters that they ſtyred, and vnder poyntes for commune auaũtage, they embolded the paſſyfe to take in the actiues doynge, and alſo ſtyred inſecutes of comynge to crye after thynges, whiche (quod they) maye not ſtande but we be executours of tho matters, and auctoryte of execucion by comen election to vs be deliuered, and that muſte entre by ſtrengthe of your mayntenaunce, for we ar of ſuche degree put, oppreſſyon of theſe olde hyndrers ſhall agayne ſurmounten and puten you in ſuche ſubiection, that endleſſe woe ye ſhul complayne. The gouernementes (quod they) of youre cytelette in the handes of tyrrencious cytezyns ſhall drynge in peſtylence and diſtruction to you good menne, and therfore let vs haue the comune admyniſtracyon to abate ſuche purlies. Alſo (quod they) it is worthy the good to cõmende, and thy gylty deſertes to chaſtice. There ben citezins many for ferde of execucion that ſhall be doone, for extorcions by hem committed, ben euer more ayenſt theſe purpoſes, and al other good menynges. Neuer the latter ladye, trewely the meaninge vnder theſe wordes, was fully to haue apeched the myghty ſenatoures, which hadden heuy herte for the myſgouernaunce that they ſten. And ſo lady whan it fel that free election, by great clamour of muche people, for great diſeaſe of miſgouernaunce ſo frequently ſtoden in her election, that they hem ſubmitted to euery maner face, rather thanne

haue

haue suffered the maner and the rule of the hard gouernours, not withstandynge that in the contrary holden moche comune mery ryot haue no consyderacion, but onely to voluntary lustes, without reason. But than thylke gouernour so forsaken, fayntynge to forne his vndoynge for mayne rule in hys tyme, hope to haue letted thilke electyon, and haue made a newe by hys strife to haue bene chosen, and vnder ỳ mody roze haue ateted. These thynges ladye knowen amonge the pryncys, and made open to the people, drawerh in amendemente, that euery degree shall bene ozdayned to stande there as he shulde, and that of errours comynge herafter, men may lyghtly to forne hande puruaye remedye, in thys wyse peace and rest to be furthered and hold. Of the whiche thynges ladye, thilke persons broughten in answere to forne their most soueraine iudge, not coacted by paynynge dures, openlye knowlegeden, and asked therof grace, so that apertely it preueth my wordes ben sothe, without forgynge of lesynges.

But nowe it greueth me to remembre these byuers seuerences, in langlinge of these shyy people: certes me thynketh they oughten to mateu toye that a sothe maye be knowe. For my trouth and my conscience bene wytnesse to me bothe, that this knowynge sothe haue I sayde for no harme ne malice of tho persones, but onely for trouthe of my sacrament in my leigeaunce, by whiche I was chargrd to my kynges behalfe. But se ye not nowe lady, how the felonous thoughtes of this people, and couyns of wicked men, conspyren ayen my sothfast trouth. Se ye not euery wizt that to these errouyous opinyõs were assentaunt and helpes to the noyse, and knewen al these thynges better than I my selfuen, appayren to fynden newe frendes, and cleapen me false, and studyen howe they mowen in her mouthes werse plyte nempne. O god what maye this be, that thylke folke which that in tyme of my mayntenaunce, and whan my might auayled to stretch to ỳ forsayd maters, tho me cõmended, and yaue me name of trouth, in so manyfolde maners that it was nyghe in euery wightes eere, there as any of thylke people werrn: and on the other syde, thilke company sontynne passed, ryuynge me name of badde loos. Now both tho propices turned the good in to badde, and badde in to good, which thyng is wonder, that they knowynge me sayng but sothe, arne nowe tempted to reply her olde prayseynges, and knowe me well in al doynges to ben trewe, and saine openly that I false haue sayd many thinges. And they aleged nothynge me to ben false or vntrewe, saue thilke mater knowleged by ỳ parties hem selfe: and god wot other mater is none. Ye also lady know these thynges for trewe, I auaunte not in prayseyng of my selfe, therby shulde I lese the precyous secre of my conscience. But ye se wel ỳ false opinion of the people for my trouthe, in tellynge out of false conspyred maters, and after the iugement of these clerkes, I shulde not hyde the sothe of no maner person, mayster ne other, wherfore I would not drede, were it put in the consyderacyon of trewe and of wyse. And for comers herafter shullen fully out of denwere, al the sothe know of these thynges in acte, but as they werne I haue put it in scripture, in perpetuel remembraunce of true meanynge. For trewly lady me semeth, that I ought to beare ỳ name of trouth, that for the loue of right wysnesse haue thus me submytten: But now than the false fame which that clerkes sayne flyeth as faste as doth the fame of trouthe, shal so wyde spredc, tyl it be brought to the iewel that I of meane, and so shall I ben hyndred without any measure of trouthe.

Than gan Loue sadlye me beholde, and sayde in a chaunged voyce, lower than she hadde spoken in any tyme. Fayne wolde I (quod she) that thou were holpen, but hast thou sayd any thing whiche thou myght not prouen? Parde (quod I) the persons, euerye thyng as I haue sayd, han knowleged hem selfe. Yea (quod she) but what if they hadden nayed, howe woldest thou haue mayntayned it. Sothelye (quod I) it is well wyste both amongest the greatest, and other of the realme, that I profred my body so largely in to prouynge of tho thynges, that Mats shulde haue iuged the ende: but for softnesse of my wordes they durst not to thylke iudge trust. Nowe certes (quod she) aboue all fames in this worlde, the name of marcyall doyngs is moste pleasen to ladyes of my loze, but sythen thou were redy, and thyne aduersarye in thy presence refused thilke doyng, thy fame ought to be so bozne, as if in dede it had take to the ende. And therfore euery wight that a-

ny tyme ype of treſõ hath, and herefy of the in-
fame, for theſe thynges hath this antwerre to
ſaye: trewly thou ſayeſt for thyne aduerſa-
ryes thy wordes affirmed. And yf thou had-
deſt lyed, yet are they diſcomfyted, ỳ pryſe lea-
ned on thy ſyde, ſo that fame ſhal hold down
infame, he ſhal bring vpon none halfe.
What greueth the thyne enemy to ſaya their
owne ſhame, as thus: We arne diſcomfyted,
and yet oure quarel is trewe. Shall not the
loos of thy frendes ayenward bequace thilk
enfame, and ſay they graunted a ſothe with-
oute a ſtroke or fightig. Many men in batalle
ben diſcomfyted and ouercome in a right ful
quarel, that is goddes pryuy iugement in he-
uen: but yet although the partie be yolden, he
maye with wordes ſay hys quarel is trewe,
and to yelde him in the contrarie for drede of
dethe, he is compelled: and he that graunteth
and no ſtroke hath feled, he may not crepe a-
way in this wiſe, by none excuſacion. Indif-
ferent folke wyl ſay, ye who is trewe, who is
falſe, him ſelf knowlegeth tho thiges. Thus
in euery ſyde fame ſheweth to the good and
no badde. But yet (qõ I) ſome wyl ſaye I ne
ſhulde for no dethe haue diſcouered my may-
ſtreſſe, and ſo by vnkyndnes they wol knette
infame to purſue me aboute: thus enemyes
of wyl in manyfolde maner wol ſtrehe pryuye
ſerpentynes queyntyſes, to quenche and dy-
ſtroye by venym of many beſynneſſes the light
of truthe, to make herres to murmure agenſt
any perſone, to haue me in hayne wythouten
anye cauſe. Nowe (quod ſhe) here me a
fewe wordes, and thou ſhalte fully ben aun-
ſwerde I trowe. Me thynketh (quod ſhe)
right nowe by thy wordes, that ſacrament of
ſwearyng, ỳ is to ſay, chargyng by othe was
one of the cauſes to make ỳ diſcouer the mali-
cious ymaginacions tofore nempned, euerye
othe by knyttyng of copulacion muſte haue
theſe lawes. That is trew iudgemẽt & right
wyſeneſſe, in whyche thynge if anye of theſe
lacke, the othe is yourned in to the name of
periury: than to make a trewe ſerment, muſte
nedes theſe thynges folowe, for ofte tymes a
man to ſaye ſothe, but iugement and iuſtyce
folow he is forſworne: enſample of Herodes
for holdyng of his ſerment was dampned.
Alſo to ſaye truthe rightfullyche but in iu-
gement otherwhile is forboden, by that al ſo-
thes be not to ſayne. Therfore in iugemente
in truthe and right wiſenes is euery creature
bounden by payne of periury full knowyng
to make, tho it were of his owne perſone in
drede of ſinne, after that worde better is it to
dey than lyue falſe, and all wolde peruerted
people falſe reporte make in vnkyndneſſe, in
that entent thy fame to reyſe, whan lyght of
truthe in theſe maters is forthe ſprongen, and
openly publyſhed among cõmens, than ſhal
nat ſuche derke enfame darr appere for pure
ſhame of his falſnes, as ſome mẽ ther be that
their owne enfame can none other wiſe holde
or ris excuſe, but be hyndrynge of other mẽ-
nes fame, which that by non other cauſe, dis-
pen other men falſe, but for with theyr owne
falſneſſe mowen they nat bene auaunced, &
eis by falſe ſklaundryng wordes, other men
ſhendyn their owne trewe ſklaunder, to ma-
ke ſeme the laſſe, for if ſuch men wolden their
eyen of their conſcience reuolue, ſhulden ſe
the ſame ſentence they legen on other, ſpryng
out of their lydes, with ſo many brannches it
were impoſſyble to nombre. To whiche there
fore maye it be ſayd in that thynge, this man
thou demeſt, therin thy ſelf thou cõdempneſt
But (quod ſhe) vnderſtand not by theſe wor-
des, that thou wene me ſay the to be worthy
ſclaũder, for any mater tofore written, trew-
ly I wolde wytneſſe the contrary, but I ſaye
that the beames of ſclaundryng wordes, may
nat be done away tyl the daye of dome. For
howe ſhuld it nat yet amonges ſo great pleu-
tie of people ben many ſhrewes, ſythen whã
no mo but right perſons in Noes ſhippe were
cloſed, yet one was a ſhrewe and ſhorned his
father. Theſe thynges (quod ſhe) I trowe,
ſhewen that falſe fame is nat to drede, ne al
wyſe perſons to accepte, and namelye not of
thy Margarite, whoſe wiſedom here after I
thynke to declare, wherfore I wot wel ſuche
thynge ſhal nat her aſterte, than of vnkynde-
neſſe thyne othe hath the excuſed at the fulle.
But now if thou woldeſt nat greue, me lyſte
a fewe thynges to ſhewe. Say on (quod I)
what ye wol, I trowe ye meane but trouthe,
and my profyte in tyme commynge. Trewlye
(quod ſhe) that is ſoth, ſo thou con wel kepe
theſe wordes, and in the ineſt ſecre chambre
of thyne hert, ſo faſte hem cloſe that they ne-
uer flytte, than ſhalte thou fynde hem auay-
lyng. Loke nowe what people haſt thou ſey-
ned, whiche of hem all in tyme of thyne exyle
euer the refreſſhed, by the balewe of the leſ
coyned plate that walketh in money. Wot

wel

was sory or made any rewth for thy disease: if they hadde getten their purpose of thy misaventure sette they nat an hawe. Lo whan thou were emprisonned, how faste they hyed in helpe of thy delyueraunce. I wene of thy tethe they yeue but lyte: They loked after no lynage, but after their owne lustes. And yf thou lyste say the sothe, al that meyny that in this bigge the daughten, lokeden rather after thyne helpes, than the to haue releued.

Owen nat yet some of hem money for hys commens? Paydest not thou for some of her dispences, tyl they were tourned out of Selande? Who yaue the euer ought for any rybynge thou madest? yet pardye, some of hem token money for thy chambre, and putte tho pens in his purse bauerynge of the tenter.

Lo for which a company thou medlest, that neyther the ne them selfe mighten helpe of vnkyndnesse, nowe they beare the name ꝑ thou supportest of hem for to haue. What myght thou more haue done than thou dyddest, but yf thou woldest in a false quarell haue ben a fyghynge martyr? I wene thou steddest as longe as thou myghte, their prayere to counsayle, whiche thinge thou helest lenger than thou shuldest. And thilke ꝑ oughte the money no penny wolde paye, they wende thy returne hadde ben an impossybie. Howe myght thou better haue hem reproued, but thou in thy nedy diseases? Now hast thou ensaple for whome thou shalt meddle: trewly this loze is wozth many goodes.

Ofte gan Loue to sterne me these wordes, thinke on my speche, for trewlye here after it woll do the lykynge, and howe so euer thou se Fortune shape her wheele to tourne, this meditation by no waye remoue. For certes fortune sheweth her fayrest, whan she thynketh to begyle. And as me thoughte here tofore thou saydest thy loos in loue, for thy rightwysenesse ought to be raised, shulde be alowed in tyme comynge. Thou myght in loue so the haue, that loos and fame shuld so ben rayised, that to thy frendes cõfort, and sorowe to thyn enemys endlesse shull endure. But if thou were ꝑ one shepe amonges the hundred were loste in deserte, and oute of the way hadde erred, and nowe to the flocke art restoored, the shepeherd hath in the no ioye, and thou ayen to the forrest tourne. But that right as the sorowe and anguysshe was grete in tyme of thine out waye goynge, ryght so ioye and gladnesse shall be doubled to sen the conuerted, and nat as Lothes wyfe ayen lokynge, but hoole counsayle wyth the shepe folowyng, and with them grasse and herbes gadre. Neuer the later (quod she) I saye not these thynges for no wantrust that I haue in suppolynge of the otherwyse thanne I shulde. For trewly I wotte wel, that nowe thou arte sette in suche a purpose, out of whiche the lyste not to parte. But I saye it, for manye men there bene, that to knowynge of other mẽnes doynges setten al their cure, and lyghtly desyren the bad to clatter rather thã the good, and haue no wyl their owne maner to amende. They also hate of olde rancoure lyghtly hauen, and there that suche thynge abyderh, sodaynly in their mouthes procedeth the habundaunce of the herte, and wordes as stones, stones out throw. Wherfore my counsayle is euer more openlye and apertelye, in what place thou syt, counterplete therrours and meanynges, in as ferre as thou hem wystyst false, and leaue for no wyghte to make hem be knowe in euery bodies eare, and be alway pacient and vse Jacobes wordes, what so euer menne of the clappen, I shal sustayne my ladyes wrath which I haue deserued, so longe as my Margarite hath rightwised my cause. And certes (quod she) I wytnesse my selfe, if thou thus cõuerted sorowest in good meanynge in thyne herte, wolte from all vanyte partitely departe, in consolatyoun of all good pleasaunce of that Margaryte, whiche that thou desyrest after wyl of thine hert, in a maner of a mothers pyte, shull fully accepte the in to grace. For ryght as thou rẽtest clothes in open syghte, so openlye to sowe hem at his worshyppe withouten reproue cõmended. Also ryght as thou were ensample of moche folde errour, righte so thou must be ensample of manyfolde correctioun, so good sauour to forgoyng al errour distroyeng causeth dilygent loue, with manye playted prayenges to folowe, and than shall all the fyue errours make the folowynge worshippes to seme hugely encreased, blacke and white set togyder, euery for other more semeth, and so dothe euery thynges contrary in kynde. But inasmuche that gothe alwaye tofore, and prayenge worshyppe by any cause folowinge after, maketh to ryse the like honour in double of welth, and that quencheth the spotte of the

fyll enfame. Why wenyste I sayd these thinges, in hyndrynge of thy name? Naye nay god wotte, but for pure encreasyng worshyp thy ryght wysenesse to cõmende, & thy trouth to seme the more. Wost not wel thy selfe, that thou in sourme of makyng passeth nat Adam that eate of the apple. Thou passeth nat the stedfastnesse of Noe, that eatynge of the grape become dronke. Thou passyst nat the chastyte of Lothe, that lay by his doughter. Eke the nobley of Abraham, whom god reproued by his pride. Also Dauydes meknesse, whyche for a woman made Vrye be slawe. What also Hector of Troye, in whome no defaute myght be founde, yet is he reproued that he ne hadde with manhode nat suffred ỹ warre begon, ne Paris to haue went into Grece, by whom gaune all the sorowe: for trewly him lacketh no benym of pryue consentyng, whyche that openly leaueth a wrong to withsay.

Lo eke an olde prouerbe amonges many other. He that is stylle semeth as he graunted.

Nowe by these ensamples, thou might fully vnderstand, that these thinges ben wrytte to your lernynge, and in right wysnesse of tho persones, as thus: To euery wygot hys defaute cõmytted, made goodnes afterwardes done, be the more in reuerẽce and in open shewyng, for ensãple is it nat song in holy churche. Lo howe necessarye was Adams synne, Dauid the kynge gat Salomon the kinge, of her that was Vryes wife. Truly for reprofe is none of these thynges writte: Right so tho I reherce thy before dede, I repreue ỹ neuer the more, ne for no vyllany of the are they rehersed, but for worshyp, so thou cõtinew wel here after, and for profyte of thy selfe, I rede thou on hem thynke.

Than sayde I right thus. Ladye of vnyte and accorde, enuye and wrathe lurken there thou comest in place, ye weten wel your selue and so done many other, that whyle I administred the office of cõmen doynge, as in ruling of the stablyshmentes amonges the people, I defouled neuer my conscyence for no maner dede, but euer by wytte and by counsayle of the wyseste, the maters weren drawẽ to their ryght endes. And thus trewly for you lady I haue desyred suche cure, and certes in your seruyce was I nat ydel, as ferre as suche doynge of my cure stretcheth. That is a thyng (quod she) that may drawe many herts of noble, and voice of cõmune in to glory, and fame is nat but wretched and fickle.

Alas that mankynde coueyteth in so leude a wyse, to be rewarded of any good dede, syth glory of fame in this worlde, is nat but hyndrynge of glorye in tyme commynge. And certes (quod she) yet at the hardest such fame is no heuen, is not the erth but a centre to ỹ cercle of heuen. I pricke is wonder lytell in respecte of al the cercle, and yet in al this pricke may no name be borne in maner of prestyng for many obstacles, as waters and wyldernesse, and straunge langages, and not onelye names of men ben styled and holden oute of knowlegynge by these obstacles, but also cyteres and realmes of prosperite be letted to be knowe, and their reason hindred, so that they mow not ben parfitely in mennes proper vnderstandynge. Howe shulde then the name of a synguler londenoys passe the glorious name of London, whyche by many it is commended, and by many it is lacked, and in many mo places in erthe not knowen, than knowen: for in many countrees lytel is London in knowyng or in spech, & yet among one maner of people may not suche fame in goodnes come, for as many as praysẽ comenly as many lacken. Fye thã on such maner fame, slepe & suffre him ỹ knoweth priuyte of herres, to dele such fame, in thilke place there nothynge ayenst a sorth shal neither speke ne dare aperte, by attourney ne by other maner. Howe many great named and many great inworthynesse loued, han be tofore this tyme, that now out of memorie are slidden and clenely forgotten, for defaute of writinges, and yet scriptures for great elde so ben defased, that no perpetualte maye in hem ben iuged. But yf thou wolte make comparisoun to euer, what sore mayst thou haue in erthly name, it is a fayre lyghtnesse, & pees or one grayne of whete, to a thousande shyppes ful of corne charged. What nombre is betweene the one & thother, and yet mowe bothe they be nombred, & ende in rekenynge haue. But trewly all that may be nombred, is nothing to recken, as to thilke that maye nat be nombred, for ofte thynges ended is made comparison, as one lytel, another great, but in thynges to haue an ende, & another no ende, suche comparisoun may not be founden. Wherfore in heuen to bene loued with god hath none ende, but endelesse endureth, and thou canste nothynge done aryght, but thou desyre ỹ rumoure therof be spraied

and

and in euery wightes eare, & that dureth but a pryche, in respecte of ꝑ other. And so thou lest rewarde of folkes smale wordes, and of bayne prayseynges. Trewely therein thou lest the guerdon of vertue, and lesest the grettest valoure of conscyence, and vphap thy renome eurlastyng. Therfore boldely renome of fame of the erthe shuld be hated, and fame after deth shuld be desyred, of werkes of vertue asketh guerdoning, and the soule causeth al vertue. Thā the soule delyuered out of prisone of erthe, is most worthy suche guerdone amonge to haue in the eurlastyng fame, and nat the body that causeth all mannes yuels.

IF twey thinges art thou answered as me thynketh (quod Loue) and yf anye thynge be in doute in thy soule, shewe it forth eyne ignoraunce to dere, and leaue it for no shame. Certes (quod I) there ne is no bodye in this worlde, that aught coude saye by reasonayenst any of your skyles, as I leue, and by my wytte nowe serue I wel, that yuel speckers or beaters of emfame, may lytel greue or let my purpose, but rather by suche thynge my quarel to be forthered. Yea (qō she) and it is prouerd also that, the like iewel in my heynge shal nat there thorow be steered, of the lest moment ꝑ myght be ymagyned. That is soth (qō I). Wel (qō she) than seneth there, to declare ꝑ thy influsiaūce is no maner letting as thus, for that the is so worthye thou shuldest not clymbe so hygh, for thy moebles and eyne estate arne voyded, thou thynkest fallen in suche mysterie, that gladnesse of thy purpose wol nat on the discende. Certes (quod I) that is sothe: right such thoughte is in myne hert, for cōmenly it is spoken, and for an olde prouerbe it is leged: he that heweth to hye, wyth chyppes he maye lese his syght. Wherfore I haue bene aboute in all that euer I myghte, to studye wayes of remedye by one syde or by another. Nowe (quod she) god forbede are thou seke any other doynges, but suche as I haue lerned the in our reclyng whiles, and suche herbes as ben planted in oure gardyns. Thou shalte well vnderstāde, that aboue man is but one god alone. How (quod I) han men to forne this tyme trusted in writtes and chaunternentes, and in helpes of spirites that dwellē in the ayre, and therby they han gotten their desyres, where as first for al his manly power he daunced behynde.

O (quod she) fye on suche maters, for trewly that is sacrilege, and that shal haue no sorte with any of my seruaūtes, in myne eyen shall suche thinge not beloked after. Howe often is it cōmaunded by these passed wyse, that to one god shal men serue, and not to goddes. And who that lyste to haue myne helpes, shal aske none helpe of foule spirites. Alas, is nat man maked semblable to god: wost thou not wel that all vertue of lyuelych werkynge by goddes purueyaunce is vnderputte to resonable creature in erthe, is not euery thynge a thisshalfe god-made buxome to mānes cōtemplacion, vnderstandynge in heuen and in earthe, and in helle. Hathe not manne beynge with stones, soule of wexyng with trees and herbes. Hathe he not soule of felynge, with beestes, fyshes, and fowles, and he hath soule of reason and vnderstandyng with aungels, so that in him is knytte al maner of lyuynges by a reasonable propozeyoun. Also man is made of all the foure elementes. Al vniuersytte is tekened in hym alone: he hathe vnder god principalyte aboue al thinges. Nowe is his soule here, nowe a thousande myle hence, nowe ferre nowe nygh, now hye nowe lowe, as swyfte in a momente, as in mountenaunce of tenne wynter, and al this is in mannes gouernaunce and disposytion. Than shewethe it, that men ben lyche vnto goddes, and chyldren of mooste heyghte. But nowe sythen all thynges vnderputte to the wyl of reasonable creatures, God forbede anye man to wynne that lordshyppe, and aske helpe of any thynge lower than him selfe, & than nameiye of foule thiges innominable. Now thā why shuldest thou wene to lowe to highe, sythen nothynge is the aboue but god alone. Trewly I wote well, that thilke iewell is in a maner cuyn in lyne of degree there thou arte thy selue, and nought aboue, saue thus. Aungell vpon aungel, manne vpon manne, and deuyll vpon deuyll, han a maner of soueraygnitie, and that shal cease at the daye of dome: and so I saye, thoughe thou be putte to serue the like iewel durynge thy lyfe, yet is that no seruage of vnderputtynge, but a maner of trauaylynge plesaunce, to conquere and gette that thou haste not. I seete nowe the hardest, in my seruice nowe thou derdest for sorowe of wāynge in thy desyres: trewly al heuenly bodyes with one voice shul come and make melody in thy comynge, and saye welcome our

fere, and worthy to entre in to Jupiters ioy,
for thou with myghte haste ouercome dethe,
thou woldest neuer flytte out of thy seruyce,
and we al shul now pray to the goddes rowe
by rowe to make thilke Margarite ꝑ no routh
had in this persone, but vnkyndely withoute
comforte lette the deye, shal desetre her self in
suche wyse, that in erthe for parte of vengeaunce, shal she no ioye haue in loues seruyce,
and whan she is deed, than shal her soule ben
brought vp in to thy presence, and whyder
thou wylte chese, thilke soule shal bene commytted. Or els after thy dethe anone all the
forsayd heuenly bodies by one accord, shal
be nommen from thilke perle, all the vertues
that firste her were taken, for she hathe hem
forfeyted, by that on the my seruaunte in thy
lyue she wolde not suffre to worche all vertues, withdrawen by might of the hygh bodyes: Why than shuldest thou wene so anye
more. And yf the lyste to loke vpon the lawe
of kynde, and wyth ordre whiche to me was
ordayned, sothely none age, none ouertournynge tyme, but hytherto hadde no tyme ne
power to chaunge the weddyng, ne ꝑ knotte
to vnbynde of two hertes thorow one assent
in my presence, togyther accorden to endure
tyll dethe hem departe. What trowest thou
euery vycot wotte the menyng and the priuy
entent of these thynges? they wene forsothe
that suche accorde may not be, but the rose of
maydenhede be plucked, do waye do waye,
they knowe not hynge of thys: for consente of
two hertes a lone, maketh the fastenynge of
the knotte, neyther lawe of kynde ne mannes
lawe, determyneth nether the age ne the qualyte of persones, but onelye accorde betwene
thylke twaye. And trewlye after tyme that
suche accorde by their consent in hert, is enseled and put in my treasorye amonges my priuy thynges: than gynneth the name of spousayle, and althoughe they breaken forwarde
bothe, yet suche mater ensealed is kept in remembraūce for euer. And se nowe that spouses haue the name anon after accord, though
the rose be not take. The aungell bade Joseph take Marye hys spouse, and to Egypte
wende: Lo she was cleped spouse, and yet tofore ne after neyther of hem bothe mente no
fleshly luste know, wherfore the wordes of
trouth accorden, that my seruauntes shulden
forsake bothe father and mother, and be adherande to hys spouse, and they two in vnyte
of one flesshe shulden accorde. And this wyse
two that werne firste in a lytell maner disrordaunt, hygher that one and lower that other, bene made euenlyche in greet to stonde.
But nowe to enfourme the that ye ben lyche
to goddes, these clerkes sayne, and in determynacion shewen, that thre thynges hauen ꝑ
names of goddes ben cleped, that is to sayn:
man, dyuel, and ymages, but yet is there but
one god, of whom all goodnesse, al grace, and
al vertue cometh, and he his loving & trewe,
and euerlastyng, and prime cause of al being
thynges: but men ben goddes, louynge and
trewe, but not euerlastyng, and that is by adopcyoun of the euerlastynge God. Dyuels
ben goddes, styrynge by a maner of lyuynge,
but neyther ben they trewe ne euerlastynge,
and their name of godlihed they han by vsurpacion, as the prophete sayth: Al goddes of
gentyles, that is to say payayms, are dyuels.
But ymages bene goddes by nuncupacion,
and they ben nether lyuynge ne trewe, ne euerlastynge: After these wordes they cleapen
goddes ymages wrought wyth mennes handes. But nowe reasonable creature, that by
adopcion alone arte to the great god euerlastynge, and therby thou arte god cleped: lette
thy fathers maners so entre thy wyttes, that
thou myght folowe, in as moche as longeth
to the thy fadres worthynesse, so that in nothynge thy kynde from hys wyll declyne, ne
from his nobley peruerte. In thys wyse yf
thou werche, thou arte aboue all other thynges saue god alone, and so say no more thyne
hert to serue in to hye a place.

HAuy haue I now declared thyn estate
to be good, so ꝑ folowtherafter, & that
the abiectiō firste be ꝑ aleged in worthynes of
thy Margarite shall not the lette, as it shall
forther the, and encrease the, it is nowe to declare, ꝑ last obiection in nothing maye greue.
Yes certes (qō I) bothe greue and let muste
it nedes, the contrarye maye not ben proued,
and se nowe wyl ye. Whyle I was glorious in
worldly welfulnesse, and had suche goods in
welth as maken men riche, tho was I drawn
in to companyes that loos, prise, and name
yeuen: tho louteden blasours, tho curteyden
glosours, tho welcomed flatterers, tho worshypped thilke, that nowe deynen nat to loke.
Euery wight in such erthly wele habundant,
is holde noble, precious, benigne, and wise to

do

do what he shal, in any degree that men hym set, al be it that the sothe be in the contrary of al tho thynges: But he that can, ne neuer so wel him behaue, & hathe vertue habounda̅t in manyfolde maners, & be not weithed with suche erthly goodes, is holde for a foole, and sayd his witte is but sotti... Lo how false for auer is holde trewe. Lo howe trewe is cleaped false for wa...ng of goodes. Also lady, dignitees of offyce maken men mykel comended as thus: he is so good, wer he out his pe re shulde men not fynde. Trewly I trowe of some such that are so praysed, were they out ones, another shulde make hym so be knowe, he shulde of no wyse no moze ben loked after: but onely fooles wel I wotte, desyren suche new thynges. Wherfore I wonder that thilk gouernoure, out o... whome alone the causes proceden, that gouernen all thynges, whiche that hath ordeyned this worlde in werkes of the kyndely bodyes so be gouerned, not with vnstedfast or happyous thynge, but with rules of reason, which shewen the course of certayne thynges: why suffreth he suche slyding chaunges, that myslurnen suche noble thynges as ben we men, that arne a layze perfell of the erth, and holden the vppereste degre vnder god of benigne thinges, as ye sayde̅ right nowe your selfe, shulde neuer man haue ben set in so worthy a place, but if his degre were ordayned noble... as, thou that knyttest the purueyaunce of all thynges, why lokest thou not to amenden these defautes: I se shrewes that han wicked maners, lyuen in chayres of bones, lambes to punyshen, there wolues shulden ben punished. Lo vertue shyned naturelly, for pouerty lurketh and is hydde vnder cloude: but the moone false forsworne, as I knowe my selfe, for auer a yeftes hathe vsurped to shyne by day light, with peynture of other mennes prayslinges: & trewly thylke forged lizt fouly shulde fade, were the trouth away of colours fryned. Thus is night tourned in to daye, and daye in to nyght, wynter in to sõmer, and sõmer in to wynter, not in dede, but in myscleapyng of folyche people.

Now (quod she) what wenest thou of these thinges, how feleſt thou in thin hert, by what gouernaunce that thys cometh aboute.

Certes (qõ I) that wotte I neuer, but yf it be that fortune hath graunt frome aboue, to lede the ende of men as her lyketh. Ihnowe I se (quod she) thentent of thy meanyng: Lo bycause thy worldly goodes ben fullyche dispent, thou berafte out of dignite of offyce, in whiche thou madeſt thy gatheryng of thilke goodes, and yet dyddeſt in that offyce by cõsaile of wise, any thyng were ended: and true were vnto hem, whose profyte thou shuldeſt loke, and serst nowe many that in thylke herneſt made of the mokel, and now for glosing of other, deineth the nought to forther, but enhaunsen false shrewes, by wytnesshynge of trouthe. These thynges greueth thyn hert to seue thy selfe thus abated, and thau fraile of mankinde ne setteth but lytel by the lesers of suche rychesse, ...ue be neuer so much vertue, and so thou weneſt of thy iewell to renne in dispyte, and not ben accepted in to grace: All this shal the nothinge hynder. Nowe (qõ she) firſt thou wost wel thou losteſt nothing that euer mighteſt thou chalenge for thyne owne: Whan nature brought the forthe, come thou not naked out of thy mothers wombe? thou haddeſt no rychesse, and whan thou shalt entre in to the ende of euery fleshly body, what shalt thou haue with the than? So euery rychesse thou haste in tyme of thy lyuynge, nys but lente, thou might therin chalenge no propertie. And se nowe euery thynge ꝑ is a mannes owne, he may do therwith what hym lyketh, to yeue or to kepe: but richesse thou playneſt from the lost, yf thy myght had stretched so ferforth, fayn thou woldeſt haue hem kept multyplyed with mo other: and so ayenst thy wyl bẽ they departed frõ the, wherfore they were neuer thyne. And if thou laudeſt & ioyeſt any wight, for he is stuffed with suche manerrychesse, ꝑ art in that beleue begiled, for thou weneſt thilke ioye to be selineſſe or els ease, & he that hath lost suche happes to ben vnsely. Ye for sothe (qõ I). Wel (qõ she) than wol I proue ꝑ vnsely in that wyse is to prayse, & so the tother is the cõtrary to be lacked. How so (qõ I). For vnsely (qõ she) begyleth not, but sheweth thentent of her worlynge. Et ecõtra. Selyneſſe begyleth, for in prosperite she maketh a lape in blyndeneſſe, that is she windeth him to make sorow whan she wiethdraweth. Wolt thou not (qõ she) praise him better that sheweth to the his hert, tho it be with bitãde wordes & dispytous, thã him ꝑ gloseth & thinketh in their absence to do the many harmes. Certes (qõ I) the one is to comende, & the other to lach & dispice. I ha (qõ she) ryzt so ease whyle he lasteth, gloseth & flatereth, & lyght-

ly hoydeth whan she most plesauntly shewth, and euer in her absence she is about to do the tene and sorowe in herte: But vnsely al be it with bitande chere, sheweth what she is, and so doth not that other, wherfore vnsely doth not begyle. Selynesse discryeth: vnsely put away doute. That one maketh men blynde, that other openeth their eyen in shewynge of wel the dwelle. The one is ful of drede to lese that is nat hys owne: that other is sobre and maketh men discharged of moche heuynesse in burthen: The one drayeth a man from very good, ꝑ other haleth hym to vertue by the hookes of thoughtes. And wynest thou not that thy disease hath done the moche more to wynne, than euer yet thou lostest? and more than euer the contrarye made the wynne. Is nat a great good to thy thinkyng, for to knowe the hertes of thy sothfast frendes. Hardy they be proued to the ful, and the trewe haue discouered from the false. Trewly at the goynge of the yike bretrel foy, ther yede no more away, than the yike that was not thyne proper: he was neuer from that lyghtly departed, thyne owne good therfore leaueth it styll with thee. Nowe good (quod she) for howe moche woldest thou sometyme haue bought, thys very knowyng of thy frendes, from the flatterynge fyes that they gloseth, whan thou thought thy selfe sely. But thou that playnest of losse in rychesse, hast founden the most dere worthy thyng that thou cleapest vnsely, hath made the moche thinge to wynnen And also for conclusyoun of all, he is frende that nowe leaueth not hys hert from thyn helpes. And ꝑ that Margaryte denyeth nowe not to suffre her vertues shyne to the wardes, with spreadynge beames, as farre or farther than if thou were sely in worldely loye: Trewly I saye not els but she is some dele to blame.

Ah, peace (quod I) and speake no more of thys, myne herte breaketh, now thou touchest any suche wordes. Wel (quod she) thanne lette vs syngen, thou herest no more of these thynges at thys tyme.

¶ Thus endeth the first booke of the Testament of Loue, and here after folowerth the seconde.

VEry welthe maye not be foundē in al this world, and that is wel sene: Lo howe in my moste comfort, as I wende a most supposed to haue had ful answere of my contrary thoughtes, sodaynely it was banished. And al ꝑ workes of mā fatra in ꝑ same wise, whā folke weuen best her entent for to haue, & wylles to performe, anon chaunging of the lyft syde to the right halue, tourneth it so clene into another kynde, ꝑ neuer shal it come to the fyrste plyte in doynge.

O this wrongful sterrynge so soone otherwyse out of knowynge, but for my purpose was at my begynnynge, and so dureth yet, yf God of hys grace tyme woll me graunt, I thynke to performe this worke, as I haue begonne in loue, after as my thynne wytte, with inspyracion of him that bideth al grace wol suffre. Grenously god wotte haue I suffred a great throwe that the romayn emperour, whiche in vnite of loue shulde accorde and euery with other, in cause of other to auaunce, and namely sythe thys empyre to be corrected of so many sectes in heresy, of faith, of seruyce, of rule in loues religion. Trewly al were it but to shende errouyous opinions, I maye it no lenger suffre: for manye menne there ben that sayn loue to ben in grauel and sande, that with see ebbynge and flowynge wowerth, as ryches that sodaynly vanisheth. And some sayne that loue shulde be in windy blastes, that stoūdmele tourneth as a phane, and glorie of renome, whiche after lustes of the barbaunt people is areysed or stylled. Manye also wenen that in the sunne and the moone, and other sterres, loue shulde ben foūden, for amonge al other planettes moste soueraynye they shynen, as dignitees in reuerence of estates rather than good han and ocupyen. Ful many also there ben that in okes and in huge postes supposen loue to ben groūded, as in strength & in myght, which mowen not helpen their owne wretchednesse, whan they gynne to fall. But suche druerstye of sectes ayenst ꝑ ryghtful byleue of loue, these errours ben forth spredde, that loues seruauntes in the trewe rule and stedfast fayth, in no place darne apere: Thus irrecuperable ioy is went

went, and anoy endlesse is entred. For no mã aryght reproueth suche errours, but confyrmen their wordes, and sayn that badde is noble good, and goodnesse is badde: to whiche folke the prophet biddeth, wo without ende.

Also many tonges of great false techynges in gryngе manet, principallye in my tymes, not onely with wordes, but also with armes, loues seruaunters and professe in hys religion of trew rule, pursewen to confounden and to distroyen. And for as muche as holy fathers, that our christen faythe approued and strengthed to the iewes, as to men reasonable, & of diuinite lerned, proued thilke fayth with reasones, and with auctorites of the olde testament & of the newe, her pertinacie to distroy: But to paynyms, that for beestes and hounes were holde, to putte hem out of their errour, was myracles of god shewed. These thynges were fygured by comyng of thangel to the shepherdes, and by the sterre to paynyms kynges, as who sayth: Angell resonable to resonable creature, and sterre of myracle to people bestyal not lerned, werne sent to enforme. But I louers clerke in all my conning and with al my mightes, trewly I haue no suche grace in vertue of myracles, ne for no discomfyte faithedes, suffyseth not auctorites alone, sythen that suche heretykes and mayntaynours of falsytes. Wherfore I wot well sythen that they ben men, and reason is approued in hem, the clowde of errour hathe her reason bewond probable reasons, which that catchende wyt ryghtfully may not withstyte. By my trauaylynge studye I haue ordeyned hem, with ỳ auctorite mysglosed by mannes reason to graunt shal be enducted.

Nowe gynneth my penne to quake, to thinken on the sentences of the enuyous people, whiche alway ben redy, both ryder and goer to shame and to lape thys leude booke, and me for rancoure and hate in their hertes they shullen so dispyte, that althoughe my booke be leude, yet shall it been more leude holden, and by wicked wordes in many maner apayred. Certes me thynketh the sowne of theyr badde speche, ryght nowe is full bothe myne eeres. O good precyous Magaryte, myne hert shulde wepeyl, I wyll ye token hede of suche maner speche, but trewly I wotte wel in that your wysedome shal not astert. For of god maker of kynde witnesse I take, that for none enuy ne yuel haue I drawe this matter togyder, but onely for goodnesse to mayntayn, and errours in falsetes to distroy. Wherfore (as I sayd) with reason I thynke, thylke for sayd errours to distroye and dequace.

These resons and suche other, yt they endure men in loues seruyce, trewe to beleue of parfyte blysse, yet to ful faythe in credence of desert, fully mow they not suffyse, sythen fayth hath no meryte of mede, whan mannes reason sheweth experyence in doyng. For vtterly no reason the parfyte blysse of lone by no waye maye make to be comprehended. Lo what is a perfell of louers ioye, parfyte science in good seruyce, of their desyre to comprehende in bodely doynge, the lykinge of the soule, nat as by a glasse to haue contemplacyon of tyme comynge, but thilke fyxte ymagyned and thought, after face to face in beholdynge: what hert, what reason, what vnderstandyng can make hys heuen to be feled and knowe without assaye of doynge certes none. Sythen thanne of loue cometh suche fruite in blysse, and loue in hym selfe is the most amonge other vertues, as clerkes sayn: The sede of suche sprygynge in al places, in al countreys, in al wordes shulde ben sowe.

But o welawayr thylke sede is forsake, and mowen not ben suffred the londe tillers to set a werke, without meddlyng of cockle, badde wedes whiche somtime stonken, hath caught the name of loue amonge ydiotes and badde meanynge people. Neuer the latter, yet howe so it be that menne cleape thylke kynge precyousest in kynde, with manye eke names, that other thynges, that the soule yeuen the yike noble name, it sheweth well that in a maner men haue a great lykynge in wurthyppynge of thylke name, wherfore thys worke haue I writte, & to the tytled of loues name, I haue it auowed in a maner of sacrifyce, that where euer it be radde, it mowe in meryte be the excellence of thylke name the more were in authorite and wurthyppe of takynge in hede, and to what entente it was ordayned, the inferres mowen ben moued: Euery thynge to whome is owande occasyon bone as for hys ende, Aristotle supposeth that the actes of enery thynge benin a maner hys fynal cause. A fynall cause is noblerer or eis euen as noble as thylke thynge that is fynally to thilke ende, wherfore accion of thynge euerlasting, is demed to be eternal, and not tempozal, sythen

then is his fynal cauſe: Right ſo the actes of my boke loue, and loue is noble, wherfore though my boke be lewde, the cauſe with whi che I am ſtered, & for whom I ought it don, noble forſothe been bothe. But bycauſe that in connynge I am yonge, and canne yet but crepe, thys leude A, b, c, haue I ſete in to lerynge, for I can not paſſen the telling of thre as yet: and yf god wyl in thorte tyme I ſhall amend this leudneſſe in ioynyng of ſyllables, whiche thynge for dulneſſe of wytte I maye not in thre letters declare. For trewly I ſaye the goodneſſe of my Magaryte perle wolde yeue matter endytynge to many clerkes: certes her mercy is more to me ſwetter than any hyuynges, wherefore my lyppes mowen not ſuffyce in ſpekynge of her ful laude and worthyppe as they ſhulde. But who is that in knowyng of ꝑ orders of heuen, & putteth hys reſones in the erthe: I forſothe may not with blere eyen, ꝑ ſhining ſone of bertue in bright whele of thys Magaryte behold, therfore as yet I maye her not diſcryue in bertue as I wolde. In tyme commynge in another tretiſe thorow goddes grace, this ſome clereneſſe of bertue to be knowe, and howe ſhe enlumyneth al thys daye, I thynke to declare.

¶ Al thys meane whyle thys comforrable lady gan ſynge, a wonder mater of endi tynge in latyn, but trewly the noble colours in rethorike wiſe knyt were ſo crafrely, that my connyng wol not ſtretche to remembre, but the ſentence I trow ſomdele haue I in mynde. Certes they were wonder ſwete of ſowne, and they were touched al in lamentacyon wyſe, and by no werdles of mythe: Lo thus ganne ſhe ſynge in latyn, as I maye conſtrewe it in our englyſhe tonge.

Alas that theſe heuenly bodyes their lyght and courſe chewen, as nature yaue hem in commaundement at the gynnyng of the firſt age, but theſe thynges in fre choyſe of reaſon han none vnderſtandynge: but manne that ought to paſſe all thynge of deynge, of ryght courſe in kynde, ouer whelmed ſothneſſe by wrongful rytle, and hath drawen the ſterre of enuye to gon by hys ſyde, that the clyps of me that ſhulde be hys ſhynande ſonne, ſo ofte is ſey, that it wened thylk errour thorow hem come in, ſhulde ben myne owne defaute. Trewlye therfore I haue me withdrawn, and made my dwellynge out of laude in an yle by my ſelfe, in the occian cloſed, and yet ſayne there many they haue me harberowed, but god wot they faylen. Theſe thynges me grenen to thynke, and namely on paſſed gladneſſe, that in thys worlde was wonte me diſporte of highe and lowe, and now it is fayled: they that wolden maiſtries me haue in thylke ſtoundes. In heuen on hygh aboue Saturnes ſphere, in ſeaſonable tyme were they lerned, but now come queyme counſaylours that in no houſe wol ſuffre me ſoiourne, wherof is pyte: And yet ſayne ſome that they me haue in celler with wyne ſhed, in garnere there corne is layde, couered with whete, in ſacke ſowed with wol, in purſe with money faſte knytte, amonge pannes mouled in a wyche, in preſſe amonge clothes layd with ryche peiure arayed, in ſtable amonge horſe & other beſtes, as hoggys, ſhepe, and nete, and in other maner wiſe. But thou maker of lyght (in wynkyng of thyn eye the ſonne is queynt) woſt right wel that I in trewe name was neuer thus herberowed.

Somtyme to forn ꝑ ſonne in the ſeuenth partie was ſmiten, I bare both croſſe & mitre, to yeue it wher I wold. With me ꝑ pope went a fote, & I tho was wurſhyped of al holy church kinges badé me their crownes holde. The law was ſet as it ſhuld: tofore ꝑ iuge as wel ꝑ poꝛe durſt shewe his greſe as the ryche, for al hys money. I defended the taylages, and was redy for the poore to pay. I made great feeſtes in my tyme, and noble ſonges, and maryed damoſelles of gentil feture, without ten golde or other rychelle. Poore clerkes for wytte of ſchole, I ſete in churches, and made ſuche perſones to preach: and tho was ſeruyce in holy churche honeſt and denoute, in pleſaunce bothe of god and of the people. But nowe the leude for ſymonye is auaunced, and ſhendeth al holye churche. Nowe is ſtewarde for hys achates, nowe is courteour for hys debates, nowe is eſcheteour for hys wronges, nowe is loſell for hys ſonges, perſoner and preaunchre alone, with whiche manye thriftye ſhulde encreaſe. And yet is thys threwe behynde, free herr is forſake, and loſengeour is take. Lo it accorderh, for ſuche there ben that voluntarye luſtes haunten in courte with ribaudry, that tyl mydnight and more wol playe and wake, but in the churche at matyns he is behynde, for cuyl diſpoſycion of hys ſtomake: therfore he ſhulde eare braune bleed, & ſo dyd his eye, his eſtate ther

with

with to strengthen. Hys auter is broke, and lowe lyche in poynte to gone to the erthe, but hys horse must ben easy and hye to beare him ouer great waters. Hys chalyce poore, but he hath ryche cuppes. No towayle but a shete there god shal ben handled. And on his meate boyde there shal ben boyde clothes and towelles manye payre. At masse serueth but a clergeon: fyue squiers in hal. Poore chauncel, ogen holes in euery syde: beddes of sylke with tapytes goyng al aboute hys chambre. Poore masse boke and leude chaplayne, and broken surplyce with manye an hole: good houndes and manye, to hunte alter harte and hare, to fede in their fermes. Of poore men haue they great care, for they euer craue, and nothynge askern, they wolden haue hem doluen. But amonge legystres there dare I not come, my doynge they sayne maken hem nedye, they ne wolde for nothyng haue me in town, for than were tost and forth nought worthe an hawe aboute ꝑ pleasen no men, but thilke greuous and torcious dē in might and in doyng: these thynges to sayne sayd mowe wel if men lyste ryme, trewly they accorde nothynge. And for as moche as al thinges by me shuldē of right ben gouerned, I am sorye to se that gouernaunce fayleth, as thus: To serue smale and low gouerne the hye, and bodyes aboue. Certes ꝑ polycye is nought, it is forbode by them that of gouernaūce treaten ꝑ enformen. And right as beestly wyfte shulde ben subiecte to reason, so erthely power in it selfe, the lower shulde ben subiecte to ꝑ hyer. What is worth thy body, but it be gouerned with thy soule right so lytel or nought is worthe erthly power, but if reignaryfe prudener in heedes gouerne the smale, to whiche heedes the smale owen to obey, and suffre in their gouernaūce. But souerainnesse ayenwarde shulde thynke in thys wyse: I am seruaunt of these creatures to me deliuered, not lorde but defendour: not mayster but enformer, not possessoure but in possessyon, and to hem lyche a tree in which sparowes shullen sheken, her byldes to norishe and forth bringe vnder suerte ayenst al rauenous foules and beestes, and not to be tyraunt them selfe. And than the smale in reste and quiete, by the heedes wel disposed, owen for their soueraynes helth and prosperyte to praye, and in other doynges, in maner maunere therof performe, without other administracyon in rule of anye maner gouernaunce. And they wil haue in hem, and grace to come to such thinges, yet shulde they ceasse tyl their heedes them cleped, although profit and pleasaunce shulde folowe. But trewly other gouernaunce ne other medlinge ought they not to claime, ne ꝑ heedes on hem to put. Trewly amonges cosinage dare I not come, but if richesse be my meane, forthly the ꝑ other bodily goodes maketh nigh cosinage, ther neuer propinquite ne alyaunce in lyue was, ne shuld haue be, nere it for her medlig maners, wherfore kidely am I not ther leged. Powerr of kinred is behynde, richesse suffreth hym to passe: truly he saith he com neuer of Japheteꝰ childrē: wherof I am sory ꝑ Japheteꝰ childrē for powerr, i no linage ben rehersed, ꝑ Cayneꝰ childrē for ryches be maked Japhetes heirs. Alas this is a wonder chaunge betwene tho two Noes children, sythen that of Japheteꝰ offspryngе comeden knightes, ꝑ of Cayn discended ꝑ lyne of seruage to his brotherꝰ childrē. Lo howe gentylesse and seruage as cosyns, bothe discended out of two brether me of one body: Wherfore I say in sothnesse, that gentylesse in kynrede maken not gentyll lynage in succession, without deserte of a mannes owen selfe. Where is nowe the lyne of Alysaundre the noble, or eis of Hector of Troye? Who is discended of ryght blode of lyne fro kinge Artour? Parde sir Perdicas, whom that kynge Alisādre made to ben hys heir in Grece, was of no kynges blode, hys dame was a tombystere. Of what kinred ben the gentyles in our dayes: I trow therfore if any good be in gētylesse, it is only that it semeth a maner of necessyte be input to gentylmen, that they shulden not baryen fro the bertues of their auncestres. Certes al manet lynage of menne ben euen lyche in byrth, for one father maker of al goodnes enformed hem al, ꝑ al mortall folke of one sede are greyned. Whereto auaūt men of her lynage, in cosynage or in elde fathers. Loke now the gynning, and to god maker of mans person, there is no clerke ne no worthy in gentilesse: and he that norisheth his corage with vyces ꝑ vnreasonable lustes, and leueth the kynde course, to which ende him brought forthe his byrthe, trewly he is vngeneryl, and amonge clerkes may ben nempned. And therfore he that wol ben generyl, he mote daunten his flesshe fro vyces ꝑ causen vngentylnesse, and leaue also reygnes of wicked lustes, and draw to him bertue, that in al places gentylnesse

selfe gentrymen maketh. And to speake I in feminyne gendre in generall, of tho persones of the reuerence of one, whom euery wight honoureth, for her bountye and her nobleste ȳ made her to god so dere, ȳ hys moder she became, and she me hath so had so great in worshyp, that I nyl for nothyng in open declare, that in any thynge ayenst her sectemaye so wene: For all vertue and all worthynesse of plesaunce in hem habounderh. And although I wolde any thing speke, trewly I can not, I may fynde in yuel of hem no maner matere.

RYght with these wordes the fyrste of that lamentable melodye, and I gamne with a lyuely heere to praye, yf that it were lykyng vnto her noble grace, she wolde her deyne to declare me the matere that fyrste was begonne, in whiche she lefte and fyrste to speke before me gamne to synge.

Wo (quod she) thys is no newe thynge to me, to seme you mennes desyren after mater, whiche your selfe caused to begynne.

Ah good lady (quod I) in whom victorie of strength is proued aboue al other thynge, after the iugement of Eldram, whose lordshyp al lignes: Who is ȳ ryght as emperour hem commaunderh, whether thilke ben not women, in whose lykenesse to me ye aperen. For right as man haire the principalte of al thynge vnder his beynge, in the masculyne gender, and no mo genders ben there but masculyne and femynyne, al the remnaunte ben no genders but of grace, in faculte of grammer. Ryght so in the femynine, the women holden the hyperest degree of al thynges vnder thylke gendre conteyned. Who dyngerh forth kynges, whiche that ben lordes of see and of erthe, and al peoples of women ben borne: they norysshe hem that graffen hynes, they maken men comforte in their gladde cherrs. Her sorowe is derh to mannes herte. Without women the beyng of men were impossyble. They conne with their swetenesse the cruel herte tame, and make it meke, buxome, and benigne, without vyolence meuynge. In beaute of their eyen, or els of other maner frutes is al mens desires, ye more than in golde, precious stones, eyther aye rychesse. And in this degreee lady your selfe mawye herres of men haue so bounden, that parfyte blysse in soomankynde to ben men wenen, and in no thynge els. Also lady the goodnesse, the vertue of women, by proprete of discrecion, is so wel knowen, by lyghtnesse of mayer, that desyre to a good asker by no waye conne they warne: and ye th synne that wol not passe the kynde werchynge of your sexes by grete discreeyon, I wotte wel ye wol so encline my prayere, that grace of my requeste shal fully ben graunted. Certes (qō she) thus is the more parte sayeth al mankynde to praye, and to crye after womans grace, and fayne many fāmes to make herres encline to your desires: and whan these sely women seen of their kynde beleuen your wordes, and weenen al be gospel the promise of your behestes, than graunt they to you their herres, and fulfillen your lustes, wherthrough their liberte in mayserthip that they tofore had is tyraled, and so maked soueraynes and to be prayd, ȳ first was seruaunt, and boyte of prayer vsed. Anone as fyled is your luste, many of you be so trewe, that lyrel bede take ye of such kyndenesse, but with trayson anon ye thynke hem begyle, and let lyght of that thyng whiche fyrst ye maked to you wōders dere, so what thing to women it is to loue any wyght er she hym wel know, and haue him proued in many halle, for euery glyttrynge thing is not golde, and ther colour of fayre speche many vices may be hyd and conseled. Therfore I rede no wight to trust on you. Earthe, mennes herte and her speche right grysful is ful este, wherfore without good assaye, it is not worthe on many of you to truste: Certwly it is right kyndely to euery man that thynketh women betraye, and she wen ont warde al goodnes, til he haue his wil get forwerd. Lo the birde is begyled with the merry boyer of the fowlers whistel. Whan a woman is closed in your nette, than wol ye cause fynden, and brake bokindnesse her bihāde, or falsete vpon her parte, your owne malycious trayson with suche thynge to excuse. Lo than han women non other werche in bēgeaunce, but bleder and wepe tyl hem lyst fynde, and sothly her mishap cōplayne, and is put in to wetnyng that al men ben so untrewe. Soone often haue men chaunged her loues in a lytel while, or els for fayling their wyl in their places hem sette: for frendshyp shal be oue, and fame with another hym lyst for to haue, and at thynke for delyte, or els were he lost both in pacte and in clothes: is this fayre, nay god wot. I may nat tel by thousand partes, the wrōges and cheery of suche false people, for make they me

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ure so good a bode, al set ye at a myte whan your herte tourneth: And they that wenen for sorowe of you dey, the pite of your false hert is flowe out of towne. Alas therefore, ȳ euer any woman wolde take anye wyghte in her grace, syl she knowe at the ful on whome she myght at al assayes trust. Comē con no more craftē in queynte knowynge, to vnderstande the false dissemable conjectementes of mannes begilynges. Lo how it fareth, though ye men gronen and cryē, certes it is but disceit, and that preueth wel by thēdes in your werkynge. Howe many women haue bene lorne, and with shame foule shent by longe lastynge tyme, whiche thorowe mennes gyle haue ben disceyued euer their fame shal dure, and their bedes radde and song in many londes, that they han done recouereen shal they neuer, but al way ben demed lightly, in such plyte a yen shulde they fal, of whiche slaunders and trees ye false men and wicked bene the very causes, on you by ryght ought these shames and these reproues all holy dissende. Thus arne ye al nyghe vnkrowe, for al youre fayre speche your herte is full fyckell. What cause han ye women to dispise e better fruite than they bene, ne swetter spices to youre behoue mowe ye not fynde, as farre as worldly bodyes stretchen. Loke to their forminge at the makyng of their persones by god in loye of paradice, for goodnesse of mans propre body were they maked, after the lawes of ȳ bible, reherfing goddes wordes in this wise: It is good to mankynde that we make to hym an helper. Lo in paradyse for youre helpe was this tree grafted, out of whiche all lynage of man byterneth: yf a man be noble frute, of noble frute it is sprongen: the blysse of paradise to mennes forȝy herres, yet in this tree abydeth. O noble helpes ben these trees, and gētil iewel to ben worshypped of euery good creature: He that hem anoieth doth his own shame, it is a comfortable perle ayenst al tenes, Euery company is myrthed by their present bring. Certes I will neuer bertue, but a woman were therof ȳ rote. What is heuen the worse though sarazins on it lie? Is youre fayethe vnkrowe thoughe renegates maken theron leasynges. If the fyre doth any wight harme, blame his owne wytte that put hym selfe so farre in the heate. Is not fyre generyl-lest and most elemente comfortable amonges all otherefyre is these werkes in forberyng

sustenaunce to mankynde: shall fire bene blamed for it dyed a foole naturelly, by his own shaky wytte in sterynge. Ah wicked folkes, for your propre malyce, and shrewdnesse of your selfe: ye blame and dispyse the precious thynge of your kynde, and whiche thinges amonge other most ye desyren. Trewly Arra and his childzen ben shrewes, that dispise so their dames. The wickednesse and gilyng of men, in disceaūdzing of thilke that most hath hem gladed and pleased, were impossyble to wryte or to nempne. Neuer ȳ later yet I say he that knoweth a way, may it lyghtly passe: eke an herbe proued may safely to smertāde sores ben layde: So I say, in him that is proued is nothyng such parils to gesse. But these thynges haue I rehersed to warne you women al at ones, that to lightly without good assaye ye assenten not to mannes speche. The sonne in the day lyght, is to knowen from the moone that shyneth in the nyghte. Now to the thy selfe, quod she (as I haue oft sayd, I knowe wel thyne herte, thou arte none of all the toforе nempned people, for I know well the countynuaunce of thy seruyce, that neuer sythen I set the a werke, myght thy Margarye for plesaūce, frendeshyp, ne fayrehede of none other, be in poynte moued from thyne herte, wherfore in to myne household hastely I wol that thou entre, and al the parfyte priuyte of my werkyng make it be know in thy vnderstandynge, as one of my priuy famylyers. Thou desyrest (qō she) fayne to here of tho thynges there I left. Ye forsothe (qō I) that were to me a great blysse. Now (qō she) for thou shalt not wene that womans condycions for fayre speche suche thyng belongeth.

THou shalte (quod she) vnderstande fyrst amonge all other thynges, that all the cure of my seruyce to me in the parfyte blysse in doyng is desyred in euery mannes hert, be he neuer so moche a wretche, but euery man trauayleth by dyuers studye, and seke thylke blysse by dyuers wayes, but al the endes are knyt in selynesse of desyre in ȳ perfite blysse, that is suche ioye, whan men it haue gotten, there lyueth no thyng more to ben coueyted: But howe that desyre of suche perfection in my seruice be kyndely set in louers hertes, yet ther erroneous opinions misturne it by falsenesse of wenynge. And although mennes vnderstandyng be misturned, to knowe whiche

Wolde ben the way into my person, and why-
ther it abydeth yet wote they there is a loue
in every wight, wenyth by that thing ꝑ he co-
ueyteth moste, he shulde come to thilke loue,
and that is partyte blysse of my seruauntes,
but than fulle blysse maye not be, and there
lacke any thynge of that blysse in anye syde.
Eke it folowyth than, that he that must haue
ful blysse, lacke no blysse in loue on no syde.

Therfore lady (quod I tho) thylke blysse I
haue desyred, and sothe to forne this my selfe
by wayes of richesse, of dignite, of power, and
of renome, wenyng me in tho thinges had be
thilke blysse, but ayenst the heere it turneth.
Whan I supposed best thylke blisse haue get
and come to the ful purpose of your seruyce,
sodaynly was I hindred, and throwen so fer
abacke, ꝑ me thynketh an impossyble to come
there I lefte. I wol wel (quod she) and ther-
fore hast thou fayled, for thou wenest not by
the hye way: a lytel misgoyng in the gynning
causeth mykel errour in the end, wherfore of
thilke blysse thou fayledest for hauinge of ry-
chesse, ne non of the other thiges thou nèpne-
dest, nowè not make such perfite blis i loue
as I shal shew. Therfore they be not worthy
to thylke blysse, & yet somwhat must bè cause
and way to thylke blysse: Ergo there is some
suche thing & some way, but it is lytel i bhape
and that is not openly knowe. But what fe-
lest in thine hert of ꝑ seruyce, in which by me
thou art entred: Wenest aught thy self yet be
in the hye way to my blysse? I shal so shew it
to the, thou shalte nat con say the contrary.

Good lady (qõ I) altho I suppose it in my
herte, yet wolde I here thin wordes, how ye
meanen in this mater. (Qõ she) that I shall
with my good wyl. Thilke blysse desired, cõe
deale ye knowen, altho it be nat parfitly, for
kyndly entention ledeth you therto, but i thre
maner lyuynges is all suche wayes shewed.
Euery wight in this world to haue this blis
one of thilke thre wayes of lyues must procè-
de, which after opiniõs of great clerkes arne
by names cleaped, bestialich, resonablich, is
hernous: manlych is worldlich, bestiallyche
is lustes & delytable, nothynge restrayned by
bridel of reason, al that loyeth & yeueth glad
nesse to the hert, and it be ayenst reason, is li-
kened to bestiall lyuyng, whiche thinge folo-
weth lustes & delytes, wherfore in such thing
may not ꝑ precious blysse that is maister of
all vertues abyde. Your fathers tofore you
haue cleped such lusty lyuynges after ꝑ flesh
passions of delyte, which are immoniable to
fore god & mã both. Thã after determinacõ
of suche wyse, we accorden that suche passiõs
of delyte shul not be nempned, but holden for
absolute from al other liniges & prouinges,
and so lyueth in t. lyuynges, manlich & reso-
nable to declare the maters begonne. But to
make ꝑ fully haue vnderstonding in mãlyche
lyuynges, which is holden worldlich in these
thinges, so that ignorance be made no letter.
I wol (qõ she) nèpne these forsayd wayes by
names & cõclusions. First riches, dignite, re-
nome, & power, shul in this worke be cleaped
bodily goodes, for in hè hath bè a gret thrau
mãnes trust of felynesse in loue, as in riches,
sufficiance to haue maintayned that was be-
gon, by worldly cause in dignite, honour, & re-
uerence of hem that werne vnderput by mai
stry therby to obey. In renome glory of peo-
ples praising, after lustes in their hert, with-
out hede taking to qualite & maner of doing,
and in power, by trouth of lordshyps mainte-
naunce, thing to procede forth in doynge. In
al which thinges a longe tyme mãnes couey
tise in cõmune hath ben greatly groũded, to
come to ꝑ blis of my seruice, but erroly they
were begyled, & for the principal must nedes
fayle & in helpyng mowe nat auaile. Se why
for holdest hè not pore ꝑ is redy? Yes parde
(qõ I.) And him for dishonored that muche
folke deyne not to reuerèce. That is soth (qõ
I) & what him ꝑ his mightes fayleu & mowe
not helpen. Certes (qõ I) me semeth of al mè
he shuld be holden a wretch. And wenest nat
(qõ she) that he that is litel in renome, but ra
ther is oute of the prayslynges of mo mè than
a fewe be nat in shame? For sothe (qõ I) it is
shame & villany to him that coueyteth renõe,
that more folk not prayse in name thã preise.
Soth (qõ she) ꝑ saist sothe, but al these thyn-
ges are folowed of suche maner doynge, and
wenden in riches sufficiãce, in power might,
in dignyte worshyp, & in renome glory, wher-
fore they disrèded in to discrynable wenyng,
& in ꝑ seruice discrete is folowed. And thus in
general, thou & al suche other that so worthè
fayleu of my blysse that ye long han desyred,
wherfore truly i life of reason is the hie way
to this blysse, as I thynke more openly to de-
clare herafter. Neuer the later, yet in a lytell
to cõforte thy hert, in shewyng of what way
thou arte entred thy selfe, & that thy Marga-

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dre may knowe the set in the hye way, I woll enforme the in this wise. Thou hast sayled of thy first purpose, bicause thou wentest wrong and letest the hye waye on thy right syde, as thus, thou lokedest on worldy lyuinge & that thyng ꝑ begyled, & lightly therfore as a litell assay thou fongedest, but whan I turned thy purpose, & shewed the a parte of the hye way tho thou abode therein, and no dethe ne ferdnesse of non enemy might ꝑ out of thilk way erne, but euer one in thyn hert, to come to the hye hyllle whan thou were arested and fyrst tyme empriſoned, thou wer loth to chaūge thy mynd, for in thy hert thou wendest to haue bē there thou shuldest, & for I had routhe to sen the myscaried, & wyst well thyn ableneſſe my ſeruyce to forther & encrease, I come my ſelf without other meane to visyt thy person, in cō forte of thy hert: & perdy in my cōmyng ꝑ wer greatly gladed, after which tyme, no diſeaſe, no care, no teue, myst moue me out of thy hert And yet am I glad & greatlye empited, howe continually thou haddest me in mynde, wyth good auyſement of thy conſcience, whan thy kig & his princes by huge wordes & great, lo hed after variaunce in thy ſpech, & euer thou were redy for my ſake in pleſaunce of ꝑ Margarite perle, and many mo other, thy body to obiyge in to Marces boyng, if any cōtraried thy lawes, ſtedfaſt way maketh stedfaſt hert, with good hope in the ende. Trewly I woi that thou it wel knowe, for I ſe the ſo ſet and not chaungynge herte haddest in my ſeruyce, and I made thou haddest grace of thy kyng, in forzeuesnes of myckell myſdede: to the gracious kyng arte thou myckel holden, of whoſe grace & goodneſſe ſomtyme herafter I think the enforme, whan I ſhew the ground where as mozall bertue groweth. Who brought ꝑ to werke? who brought this grace about? who made thy hert hardy? Trewly it was I, for haddest ꝑ of me fayled, than of thys purpoſe had neuer taken in this wyſe. And therfore I ſay thou myght wel truſt to come to thy hyllle, ſythen thy gynnynge hathe bene hard, but euer graciouſly after thy hertes deſyre hath proceded. Hilner fyned with many heates men knowen for trew, and ſafely mē may truſt to the alay in werkynge. This diſeaſes hath proued what way hence forward thou thynkeſt to holde. Nowe in good fayth lady (quod I tho) I am nowe in, me ſemeth it is the hye way and the ryghte. Ye forſothe (quod ſhe) and now I wol diſpzoue thy firſt wayes, by whiche many men wenen to gette thilke hyllle. But for as moche as euery hert that hath cauzt ful loue, is ryed with queynt knyttinges, thou ſhalt vnderſtande that loue and thilke forezayd hillle to forne declared in this pzouinges, shal hote the knot in the hert. Wel (quod I) this impoſſelliō I wol wel vnderſtande. Nowe alſo (qō ſhe) for the knotte in the herte muſte ben frome one to an other, and I knowe thy deſyre: I wol thou vnderſtande theſe maters to ben ſayd of thy ſelfe in diſpzoninge of thy firſte ſeruyce, & in ſtrengthynge of thilke that thou haſte vndertake to thy Margarite perle. A goddes halfe (qō I) ryght wel I ſee that al this caſe is poſſible and trewe, and therfore I admytted al togyther. Vnderſtandē wel (qō ſhe) theſe termes, and loke no contradyction thou graunt.

If god wol (qō I) of all theſe thynges wold I not fayle, and if I graunt contradyction, I ſhulde graunte an impoſſyble, and that were a foule inconuenyēce, for whych thynges ladye ywis herafter I thynke me to kepe.

Well (qō ſhe) thou knoweſt ꝑ euerye thyng is a cauſe wherthzough any thynge hath beyng, ꝑ is cleped cauſed, thā if riches cauſe knot in hert, thilk riches arne cauſe of thilk pzecious thyng beyng: but after ꝑ ſentence of Ariſtotle, euery cauſe is moze in dignyte than his thyng cauſed, wherthzough it foloweth rycheſſe to ben moze in dignite thā thilke knot, but richeſſes arne kyndely naughty, badde, and nedy, and thylke knotte is thynge kyndely good, moſte pzayſed and deſyzed: Ergo thynge naughty, badde, and nedy, in kyndely vnderſtandynge is moze wozthy than thynge kyndely good, moſte deſyzed and pzayſed: the conſequence is falſe, nedes the antecedent mote ben of the ſame condition. But that richeſſes bene bad, naughty, and nedy, that wol I pzoue, wherfore they mowe cauſe no ſuche thyng, that is ſo glozious and good: The moze riches thou haſt, the moze nede haſt thou of helpe hem to kepe. Ergo thou nedeſt in rycheſſe, wherche nede thou ſhuldeſt not haue if thou hem wanteſt. Than muſte richeſſe bene nedye, that in their hauing maken ꝑ nedy to helpes in kepeie thy richeſſe to kepen, wherthzough foloweth rycheſſe to ben nedy. Euery thyng cauſynge

tyng yuels is badde & naughty: but rychesse in one cause misease, in another they mowen not cumly strecche al about. Wherof cometh plee, debate, theft, begylinges, but richesse to wynne, whiche thinges bene bad, and by rychesse arne caused: Ergo thilke richesse bene badde, whiche badnesse and nede ben knyt in to rychesse by a maner of kyndely propertye, and euery cause and caused accordeth, so that it folowerth thilke richesse to haue ꝑ same accordaunce with badnesse and nede, that their cause asketh. Also euery thynge hath his beyng by his cause, thā if ꝑ cause be distroyed, the beynge of caused is vanyshed: And so yt rychesse causen loue, and rychesse weren dystroyed, the loue shulde vanysshe, but thylke knotte and it be trewe may nat vanysshe for no goyng of no rychesse: Ergo rychesse is no cause of the knot. And many men as I sayde, setten the cause of the knot in rychesse, thilke knytten the richesse, and nothynge the purtil: thilke persons what euer they bene, wenen ꝑ riches is most worthy to be had, & that make they ꝑ cause: & so wene they thylke riches be better than the person. Cōmenly suche aske rather after the quantyte than after the qualyte, and suche wenen as wel by hem selfe as by other, that conjunction of his lyfe and of his soule is no more precious, but i as mikel as he hathe of richesse. Alas howe maye he holden suche thynges precious or noble, that neyther han lyfe ne soule, ne ordynaunce of werchynge lymmes: suche rychesse ben more worthye whan they ben in gatheryng, in departing gineth his loue of other mens prayeyng. And auaryce gatheryng maketh be hated and nedy to many out helpes: and whan leueth the possessyon of suche goodes, & they gynne vanysshe, than entreth sorowe and tene in their herres. O badde & straye bene thilke that at their departinge maketh men reuefful and sory, and in the gatheryng of hem make men nedy: Moche folke at ones mowen not cogider moche therof haue. A good gest glad deth hys hoste and all hys meyny, but he is a badde gest that maketh his host nedy, & to be afrede of his gestes goynge. Certes (qō I) me wōdreth therfore that the cōmune opinion is thus: he is worth no more than that he hath in catell. O (qō he) loke thou be not of thy opinion, for yt golde or money, or other maner of riches shynen in thy sight, whose is that nat thin: & tho they haue a litel beautie, they be nothing in cōparison of our kynde, & therfore ye shulde nat set your worthinesse in thing lōwer than your selfe, for the ryches, & fairnesse, the worthynesse of thilke goodes, & ther be any such preciousnesse in hem are nat thyn, thou madest hem so neuer, frome other they come to the, & to other they shull frō the: wherfore enbraceth ꝑ other wightes goodes as tho they were thin kynde hath drawe hem by hem selfe. Ye is sothe the goodes of ꝑ erth ben ordayned in your fode & norisshynge, but if thou wolt hold the apaide with that sufficeth to thy kynde, thou shalt nat be in daūger of no such riches, for kynde sufficeth litel thing who that taketh hede. And if thou wolt algates wh superfluite of riches be atteyned, ꝑ shalt hastely be anoyed, or els yuell at ease. And fairnesse of fridres & of habytacions, & multytude of meyne, maye nat be reknowed as riches that are thyn owne, for if they be bad it is great sclaunder & villany to the oumpier, and if they be good or faire, the mater of the workeman that hem made is to prayse. Thou shulde otherwise bountir be cōpted for thin, thilke goodnesse & fairnesse be proper to the thinges hem selfe, thā if they be nat thin sorow nat whan they wend, ne glad the not in pōpe and I pride whā thou hem hast, for their beautie & their beautes cometh out of their owne kynd, & not of thyn owne person: as faire ben they in their not kaupng as whan thou haste hem, they be not faire for thou hast hem, but thou haste geten hem for the fairnesse of them selfe. And there ꝑ daylance of men is demed in riches outforth, wenē me to haue no proper good in thē selfe, but seche it in straunge thinges. Trewly the cōdicio of good wenyng is in ꝑ mistourned, to weue your noblenes be not in your selfe, but in the goodes & beautie of other thinges. Hardy the bestes ꝑ han but fryng soules, haue sufficiaunce in their owne selfe: & ye that ben lyke to god, seken encrese of sufficiaunce from so excellent a kynde of so lowe thinges, ye do great wrong to him that you made lordes ouer al erthly thinges, & ye put your worthynesse under the nōbre of the fete of lower thynges & foule, whan ye iudge thilke riches to be your worthynesse, thā put ye your selfe by estimacio under thilke foule thynges, & than leue ye the knowyng of your self, so be ye biler than any domme beest, that cometh of shrewde byce. Right so thylke persons that louen non yuel for dere worthynes

of the

of the person, but for straūge goodes, & saith the adornement in the knot lyth in such thig, his errour is perilous & shrewde, & he wrieth moche venym with moche welth, & that knot may not be good whan he hath it getten. Certes thus hath riches with flyckering slyt anoyed many: & often whan there is a throw out shewe, he coueyteth al the golde, al the precious stones that mowen be founden to haue in his bandon, he weneth no wyght be worthye to haue suche thinges but he alone. How many haste thou knowe nowe in late tyme, that in their rychesse supposed sufficiance haue folowed, & nowe it is al fayled. Ye lady (qō I) that is for myne medling, and otherwise gouerned thylke rychesse than they shoulde. Ye (qō she tho) had not the floode greatly arered, and throwe to hemwarde both grauel & sande, he had made no medlynge. And ryghte as ire prueth floode, so draweth see ebbe, and palleth ayen vnder wawe all the fyne oute throw, but if good pyles of noble gouernāce in loue, in well meanynge maner, bene sadly grounded, to whiche holde thilke grauell as for a whyle, that ayen lyghtly mowe not it turne: and if the pyles ben trewe, the grauell and sande woll abyde. And certes full warnyng in loue shalte thou neuer thorowe hem get ne couer, that lyghtly with an ebbe et thou beware it wol ayen meue. In richesse many mē haue had tenes and diseases, which they shulde not haue had, if therof they had failed. Thorowe whiche now declared partely it is shewed, that for rychesse shulde the knotte in herte neyther bene caused in one ne in other: trewly knotte maye ben knytte, and I trowe more stedfast in loue though rychesse fayled, and eis in rychesse is the knotte & not in hert. And than suche a knotte is false, whan the see ebbeth & withdrawerth the grauel, that suche rychesse voydeth, thilke knotte wol vnknitte. Wherfore no trust, no way, no cause, no parfyte beynge is in rychesse of no suche knotte, therfore another way must we haue.

HOnoure in dignite is wened to yeuen a ful knoete. Ye certes (qō I) and of that opinyon ben manye, for they sayne dignyte, with honour, and reuerence, causen hertes to vncheynen, and so abied to be knyt togyther, for ỳ excellence in souerayne of such degrees.

Nowe (qō she) yf dignite, honour, and reuerence causen thilke knot in herte, this knot is good and profitable. For euery cause of a cause, is cause of thyng caused: Than thus, good thynges and profitable ben by dignite, honour, and reuerence caused. Ergo they accorden, and dignytes ben good with reuerences and honour, but contraryes mowen not accorden: Wherfore by reason there shuld no dignitee, no reuerence, none honoure accorde with shrewes, but that is fals: they haue ben cause to shrewes in manye shrewdnes, for whem they accorden. Ergo from begynnyng to argue ayenwarde tyl it come to the laste conclusion, they are not cause of the knot. Lo al day at eye, ame shrewes not in reuerence, in honour, and in dignyte-yes forsothe, rather than ỳ good. Than folowerth it that shrewes rather than good shul ben cause of this knot. But of this contrary of al louers is byleued, and for a sothe openly determyned to holde.

Nowe (quod I) fayne wolde I here, howe suche dignyters accorden with shrewes.

O (qō she) that wol I shewe in manyfolde wise. Ye wene (quod she) ỳ dignites of office here in youre eyte is as the sonne, it shyneth bright withouten any cloude: whiche thinge whan they comen in the hādes of malycious tyraunes, ther cometh much harme, & more greuaūce therof, than of ỳ wyld fyre, though it brende al a strete. Certes in dygnyte of office, the werkes of the occupyer shewen the malyce and the badnesse in the person, wyth shrewes they maken manyfolde harmes, and moche people shamen. Howe often han rancours for malyce of the gouernour shuld ben mainteyned. Hathe not than suche dignytees caused debate, rumours, and yuel-yes god wote, by suche thynges haue bene trusted to make mens vnderstandyng enclyne to many queynte thynges. Thou wottest wel what I meane. Ye (quod I) therfore as dignite such thynge in tene ywrought, so ayenwarde the substaunce in dignite chaūged, relyed to brig ayen good plyte in doynge. Doway, dowaye (quod she) yf it so betyde, but ỳ is selde, that such dignite is betake in a good mannes gouernaunce. What thinge is to reckon in the dignitees goodnesse, parde the bountye and goodnesse is hers, that dien it in good gouernaunce, and therfore cometh it that honoure and reuerence shulde ben done to dignite, bycause of encreasynge bertue in the occupyer, and not to ỳ ruler, bycause of souerayntie in dignite. Sithē dignite may no bertue cause,

who is worthy worshyp for such goodnesse not dignite, but person ꝑ maketh goodnesse in dignite to shyne. This is wonder thynge (qꝺ I) for me thinketh, as the person in dignite is worthy honour for goodnesse, so tho a person for badnesse magre hath deserued, yet the dignite leneth to be cõmended. Let be (qꝺ she) thou erreſt right foule, dignite with badnes is helper to perfourme ꝑ felonous doyng: partly were it kindly good or any properte of kyndely vertue hadden in hem selfe, shrewes shulde hem neuer haue, with hem shuld they neuer accord. Water & fire that bẽ contrarious mowen not togider ben assembled, kind wol nat suffre such cõtraries to joyn. And sythen at eye by experiẽce in doyng, we sen that shrewes haue hem moze oftẽ than good mẽ, syker mayst thou be, that kyndly good in suche thiges is not appropred. Partly wer they kindly good, as wel one as other shuldẽ euẽ lych in vertue of gouernaũce ben worth: but one kayleth in goodnes another both the contrary, & so it sheweth kyndly goodnes in dignite not be groũded. And this same reason (qꝺ she) may be made in general on all the bodily goodes, for they comen oft to throw out shrewes. After this he is strõg that hath mizt to haue great burthyns, & he is light & swift that hath souerainte in rõning to passe other right so he is a shrew on whom shrewde things & bad han most werrhing. And right as philosophie maketh philosophers, & my seruice maketh louers: Right so if dignites weren good or vertuous, they shuld makẽ shrewes good, & turne her malyce & make hem be vertuous, but ꝑ do they nat, as it is proued, but causẽ rãcour & debate. Ergo they be nat good but vterly bad. Had Nero neuer bene Emperour, shulde neuer his dame haue be slayn, to makẽ open the priuite of his engendrure. Herodes for his dignite slewe manye childrẽ. The dignite of kig John wold haue distroyed al Englãde. Therfore mokel wisedom & goodnes both, nedeth in a person, the malyce in dignite sykly to dzidell, & vb a good hyt of arest to vbdzaw, in case it wold prauce otherwise than it shuld: trewly ye preue to dignites wzõgful names i your clepyng. They shulde here nat dygnyte, but monstre of badnesse & mayntenour of shrewes. Hardy shyne the sonne neuer so bright, & it bring forth no heate, ne seasonably the herbes out bryng of ꝑ erthe, but suffre frostes & cold, & the erth bayne to lygge by tyme of his compas in cyrcute about, ye wold wonder & dispreise that son. Yf the Mone be at ful & sheweth no lyght but derke & dymme to your syght apperith, & make distruction of ꝑ waters, wol ye not suppose it be vnder cloud or in clipsez that some preuy thing vnknowẽ to your wittes, is cause of suche contrarious doynge. Than if clerkes that han ful insyght & knowing of suche impedimentes enformen you of ꝑ sothe, ben yliottes ye ben, but if ye veuẽ credẽce to thilk clerkes wordes. And yet it doth me rene, to sen many wzetches reioycen in suche maner planettes. Truely lytel cõ they on philosophye or eis on my lore, ꝑ any desyre haue such lighyng planettes in ꝑ wyse any more to shewe. Good lady (qꝺ I) tel ye me howe ye mean in these thynges. Lo (qꝺ she) ꝑ dignites of your eyre, Sonne & Mone, nothyng in kynd hem their shynyng as they shulde. For the Sonne made no brẽnyng here in lowe, but kerfed enuye in mẽnes hertes for feblenesse of shyning here: & the Moone was about vnder an olde cloude, the lyuenges by waters to dystroye.

Lady (qꝺ I) it is supposed they had shyned as they shuld. Ye (qꝺ she) but nowe it is proued at the ful their beaute in kyndly shynyng fayled, wherfore dignyte of hym selfen hath no beautie in fairnesse, ne dzyueth nat awaye vices but encreasith, & so be they no cause of the knotte. Nowe se in good trouth, hold ye nat such sonnes worthy of no reuerẽce & dignites, worthy of no worshyp, ꝑ maketh men to do the more harmes. I not (qꝺ I). No (qꝺ she) & thou se a wise good man, for his goodnesse & wysenesse wolde thou nat do him worshyp. Therof he is worthy. That is good skil (qꝺ I) it is dewe to suche, both reuerẽce and worshyp to haue. Than (qꝺ she) a shrewe for his shrudnesse, altho he be put forth to forme other for ferde, yet is he worthy for shrewdnesse to be vnworshipped: of reuerẽce no part is he worthy to haue, for cõrarious doing belõgeth & that is good skil. For right as he deserueth ꝑ dignities, thilke same thyng ayenwarde him serueth, or elis shulde smyte. And ouer this thou wolte wel (quod she) that fire in euery place heateth where it be, and water maketh wete: Why for kyndely werkyng is so yput in hem to do suche thynges: for euery kyndely in werkyng sheweth his kynde. But thogh a wight had ben mayre of your cytie many winter togyder, and come in a straũge

place

place there he were not knowen, he shulde for his dignite haue no reuerence. Than neyther worthyppe ne reuerence is kyndely proper in no dignite, sythen they shulden don their kynde, in suche doynge yf any were. And yf reuerence ne worthyppe kyndely be not set in dignitees, and they more therin ben shewed than goodnesse, for that in dignyte is shewed but it proueth that goodnesse kyndely in hem is not grounded. Iwys neyther worthyppe ne reuerence ne goodnesse in dignyte, done none offyce of kynde, for they haue none suche properte in nature of doynge, but by false opynyon of the people. Lo howe somtyme thylke that in your eyte werne in dygnite noble, yf thou lyste hem nempne, they ben nowe ouerturned, bothe in worthyp, in name, and in reuerence: wherfore such dignytes haue no kindly werchyng of worthyppe and of reuerence, he that hath no worthynesse on it selfe. Nowe it ryseth and nowe it vanysheth after the vayraunt opynyon in false hertes of vnstable people. Wherfore yf thou desyre the knotte of this iewel, or els yf thou woldest suppose she shulde sette the knotte on the for suche maner dignite, thanne thou wenest beaute or goodnesse of thilke somwhat encreaseth the goodnesse or vertue in the bodye: But dignite of hem selfe ben not good, ne yeuen reuerence ne worthyppe by their own kynde, howe shulde they than yeue to any other a thynge, that by no way mowe they haue hem selfe. It is sene in dignite of the emperour and of manye mo other, that they mowe nat of hem selue kepe their worthyppe ne their reuerence, that that in a lytel whyle it is nowe vp a nowe downe, by vnstedfaste hertes of the people. What bontie mowe they yeue ꝑ with cloude lyghtly leauerth hys shynynge. Certes to the occupier is mokell apeyred, sythen suche doynge dothe villanye to hym that may it not maynteyne, wherfore thylke waye to the knotte is croked: and yf any desyre to come to the knot, he muste leaue thys way on his lefte syde, or els shal he neuer come there.

Auaileth aught (quod she) power of myst in mayntenaūce of worthy to comen to this knot. Parde (qd I) ye, for hertes ben rauyshed from such maner thynges. Certes (quod she) thoughe a fooles hert is with thyng rauyshed, yet therfore is no generall cause of ꝑ powers, ne of a lyker partyte hert to be loked after. Was not Nero the most shrewe one of thylke that men rede, & yet had he power to make senatours iustyces, and prynces of many landes. Was not that great power. Yes certes (quod I) wel (qd she) yet might he not helpe him selfe out disease, whanne he gan fall. Howe manye ensamples canste thou remembre of kynges great and noble, and huge power holden, and yet they might not kepe hem selue from wrecchednesse. Howe wretched was kinge Henry Curmantyl er he dyede. he had not so muche as to couer with hys membres: and yet was he one of the greatest kynges of all the Normandes ofspryng, and moste possessyon had. O, a noble thynge and clere is power, that is not founden mighty to kepe hym selfe. Now trewly a great foole is he, that for such thyng wolde sette the knotte in thyne hert. Also power of realmes is not thylke greatest power amonges the worldly powers reknened. And yf suche powers han wretchednesse in hem selfe, it followeth other powers of febler condycyon to ben wretched, and than that wretchydnesse shulde ben cause of suche a knotte. But euery wyght that hath reason wote wel that wretchydnesse by no way may ben cause of none suche knotte, wherfore suche power is no cause. That powers haue wretchydnesse in hem selfe, maye ryght lyghtly ben preued. If power lacke on anye syde, on that syde is no power, but no power is wretchydnesse: for al be it so the power of emperours or kynges, or els of their realmes (whiche is the power of the prynce) stretchen wyde and brode, yet besydes is ther mokyl folke of whiche he hathe no cōmaundemēt ne lordshyppe, & there as lacketh his power, his nonpower entreth, where vnder sprngeth that maketh hem wretches. No power is wretchydnesse, and nothyng els: but in thys maner hath kynges more porcion of wretchidnesse than of power. Trewly suche powers ben vnmyghty, for euer they ben in drede howe thylke power frō lesing may be kyped of sorow, so drede sorily prickes euer i their herts: litel is ꝑ power whiche careth and ferdeth it selfe to maynteyne. Vnmyghty is that wretchidnesse whiche is entred by the ferdfull wenynge of the wretche hym selfe: and knot ymaked by wretchidnesse is betwene wretches, and wretches al thyng bewaylen: wherfore the knot shulde be bewayled, and there is no suche partyte blysse that we supposed at ꝑ gynnyng. Ergo

power in nothing shulde cause suche knottes. Wrecchydnesse is a kyndly propertie in such power, as by way of dede, which they mow not eschewe ne by no way lyue in sykernesse. For thou woste well (quod she) he is nought mighty that wolde done that he may not don ne performe. Therfore (quod I) these kynges and lordes that han sufficiaunce at the ful of men and other thynges, mowen well ben holden mighty: their commaundementes ben done, it is neuermore denyed. Foole (quod she) or he wot hym selfe myghty or wotte it not: for he is nought mighty, that is blinde of his myght and wotte it not. That is soth (quod I) Than yf he wot it, he must nedes ben a drade to lesen it. He that wotte of hys myght is in doute that he mote nedes lese, and so leadeth him drede to ben vnmyghty. And if he recche not to lese, lytel is that worthe that of the lesyng reason retcheth nothinge: and if it were mizty in power or in strength, ỳ lesyng shulde ben withset, and whā it cometh to the lesing he may it not withsitte. Ergo thilke might is leude and naughty. Such mightes a.n like to postes and pyllers that vpryght stonden, and great might han to beare many charges, and yf they croke on anye syde, lytell thynge maketh hem ouerthrow. Thys is a good ensample (quod I) to pyllers and postes that I haue seue ouerthrowed my selfe, and hadden they ben vnderput with any helpes, they had not so lyghtly fall. Than holdest thou hym myghty that hath many men armed and many seruauntes, and euer he is adradde of hem in his herte, and for he gasteth hem, somtyme he mote the more feare haue. Comēly he that other agasteth, other in hym ayenwarde wer then the same: and thus warnyshed mote he be, and of warnyshe the houre drede: Litel is that might a right leude, who so taketh hede. Than semeth it (quod I) that suche famulers aboute kynges and great lordes, shuld great myght haue. Althoughe a syphet in augrym haue no myght in signifycation of it selue, yet he yeueth power in signifycatiō to other, and these clepe I the helpes to a post to kepe him from fallynge. Certes (quod she) thylke skylles ben leude. Why but if the shores ben wel groūded, the helpes shullen slyden and suffre the charge to fall, her myght lytel auayleth. And so me thynketh (quod I) that a poste alone stondyng vpryght vpon a basse, may lenger in great burthen endure, than croked pyllers for al their helpes, & her grounde be not syker. That is sothe (qō she) for as the byrde in bearyng of the same gynne stomble, bothe shuld fal, ryght so suche pyllers so enuyroned with helpes in falyng of the groūde, fayleth al togyder, howe yfte than suche famulers in their most pryde of prosperite ben sodainly ouerthrowen. Thou haste knowe manye in a moment so ferre ouerthrowē, ỳ couer might they neuer, whan the bruyneste of suche faylynge cometh by case of fortune, they mow it not eschewe: & myght & power, if ther were any, shuld of strength suche thynges boyde & weyue, & so it is not. Lo than which thing is this power, ỳ tho men han it they ben agast, & in no tyme of ful hauig be they siker: & if they wold weyue drede, as they mow not, litel is i worthines. Fye therfore on so noughty thing any knot to cause. Lo i aduertise, thilk bē his foes ỳ gloseth & semeth frēds i werth: thus am his famyliers his foes and his enemyes: And nothing is werse ne more mighty for to anoy than is a famylier enemye, and these thinges may they not weyue: so trewly their might is not worthe a cresse. And ouer al thynge, he that maye not withdrawe the bridell of hys fleshly lustes and his wretched complaynte (nowe thynke on thy selfe) trewlye he is not mighty: I can sene no waye that lythe to the knotte. Thylke people thanethat setten their hertes vpon such mightes and powers, often bē begyled. Parde he is not mighty that may do any thynge, that another may doone hym the selue, and that men haue as great power ouer hym as he ouer other. Iustyce that demeth men, ayenward hath ben often demed. Busirus slewe hys gestes, and he was slayne of Hercules his geste. Hugest betrayshed many menne, and of Collo was he betrayed. He that with swerde smiteth, with swerd shalbe smytten. Than gan I to studyen a whyle on these thinges, and made a countenaunce with my hande in maner to ben hyghte. Nowe let sene (qō she) me thynketh somwhat there is within thy soule, that troubleth thy vnderstandynge, saye on what it is. (Quod I tho) me thynketh that although a man by power haue suche myght ouer me, as I haue ouer other, that dispzoueth no might in my person, but yet may I haue power and myght neuer the later. Se nowe (quod she) thyne owne leudenesse: he is mighty that maye without wrecchednesse, and he is vnmyghty that may

it not

it not withstytte: but than he that might ouer the, and he wol put on the wyer chaynes, thou myght it not withstytte. Ergo thou seest thy selfe what folowyth. But nowe (quod she) wouldest thou not chose & thou se a flye han power to don harme to an other flye, & thylke haue no myght ne ayentuerynge him selfe to defende. Yes certes (quod I) who is a frayler thynge (quod she) than the fleshly body of a man, ouer whiche haue often tyme flyes, and yet lasse thynge than a flye, mokel myght in grenaunce and anoyeynge withouten anye wythstryvynge, for al thylke mannes myghtes. And sythen thou seest thyne fleshely body in kyndely power fayle, howe shulde than the accydent of a thyng ben in more surete of beynge than substancial: wherfore thylke thynges that we clepe power, is but accident to ỳ fleshly body, and so they maye not haue that suretie in myght, whiche wanteth in the substancyal body. Why there is no waye to the knotte, that loketh aryght after the hye way as he shulde.

VErely it is proued that rychesse, dygnyte, and power, ben not trewe waye to the knotte, but as rathe by suche thynges the knotte to be vnbound: wherfore on these thynges I rede no wyght trust, to gette anye good knotte. But what shulde we saye of renome in the peoples mouthes, shuld that ben any cause: what supposest thou in thyn herte

Certes (quod I) yes I trowe, for your flye resons I dare not safely it saye. Than (quod she) wol I proue that shrewes as rathe shul ben in the knotte as the good, and that were ayenst kynde. Sayne (quod I) wolde I that here, me thinketh wonder how renome shuld as wel knytte a shrewe as a good person: renome in euery degre hath auaunced, yet wyst I neuer the contrarye: shulde than renome accorde with a shrewe it maye not synke in my stomake tyll I here more. Nowe (quod she) haue I not sayd alwayes, ỳ shrewes shul not haue the knotte. What nedeth (quod I) to reherse ỳ anye more, I wotte wel euery wyght by kyndely reason, shrewes in knyttinge wol eschewe. Than (qõ she) the good ought thilke knotte to haue. Howe els (quod I) It were great harme (quod she) that the good were weyued and put out of espoire of the knot, yf he it desyred. O (qõ I) alas, on suche thynge to thinke I wene that hem̃ werpeth to se such wrongres here ben suffred on erthe: the good ought it to haue and no wight els. The good nesse (qõ she) of a person maye not ben knowe outforth, but by renome of ỳ knowers, wherfore he must be renomed of goodnesse to come to ỳ knot. So muste it be (qõ I) or els al lost that we carpen. Sothly (qõ she) ỳ were great harme, but if a good man might haue his desyres in seruyce of thilk knot, & a shrewe to be weyued, & they ben not knowen in general but by lackyng and prayling and in renome, and so by the consequence it folowyth, a shrewe ben praysed and knyt, & a good to be forsake and vnknyt. Ah (qõ I tho) haue ye lady ben here abouten, yet wolde I se by grace of ous argumẽtes better declared, howe good & bad do accorden by lackyng and prayling, me thynketh it ayenst kynde. Nay (quod she) and that shalt thou se as yerne: these elementes han cõtrarious qualytes in kynde, by whiche they mowe not accorde no more than good & bad: & in qualytes they accorde, so that cõtraryes by qualyte, accordenby qualyte. As not erth drie, and water ỳ is next and bytwene therth & wete: drie and wete ben contrary & mowen not accorde, and yet this discordaũce is boũde to accorde by clouds, for bothe elementes bẽ colde. Right so ỳ eyre that is nexte the water is wete, & eke it is hot. Thys eyre by his hete contraryeth water that is colde, but thilke cõtrariously is oned by moysture, for bothe be they moyst. Also the fyre that is next the erth, & it encloseth al about, is drie: wherthrough it contrarieth erth ỳ is wete: and in hete they accorde, for both they ben hote. Thus by these accordaunces, discordantes ben ioyned and in a maner of accordaunce they accorden by connection, that is knyttyng togyther: of that accorde cometh a maner of melodye ỳ is right noble. Right so good and bad arne contrarie in doynges, by lacking and prayling: good is bothe lacked and prayled of some, and badde is bothe lacked & prayled of some: wherfore their contrariousnye accorde bothe by lackyng and prayeyng. Thã folowyth it, though good be neuer so mokel prayled, oweth more to be knyt than the bad: or els bad for the renome that he hath, must be take as wel as ỳ good, and that oweth not. No forsothe (quod I) wel (qõ she) than is renome no waye to the knot: lo foole (quod she) how clerkes writen of suche glorie of renome. O glorye, glorye, thou arte none other thyng to thousandes of folke,

folke, but a great swoller of eres. Many one hath had ful great renome by false opinyon, of baryaunt people: And what is fouler than folke wrongefully to been prayed, or by maistye of ꝑ people gyltieſſe lacke dremedes shame folowerh therof to hem that with wrong prayseth, and also to the deserres prayseed, and vylanye and reproſe of hym that disclaundreth.

Good thylde (quod she) what ereth suche renome to the conscience of a wyse man, that loketh and measureth hys goodnesse, not by stedeleſſe wordes of ꝑ people, but by sothfastnesse of conscience: by god nothynge. And yf it be fayre a mans name be eched by moche folkes prayseng, and fouler thyng that no folke not prayseen. I sayd to the a lytel here beforn, that no folke in straunge countreyes nought prayseen, such renome may not comen to their eres, by cause of wikkednesse, and other obstacles, as I sayde: Wherfore more folke not prayseen, and that is right foule to him that renome desyreth, to were lesse folke praisen thã renome enhaunce. I trowe the thanke of a people is naught worth in remembraunce to take, ne it procedeth of no wyse iugement, neuer is it stedfast pardurable: It is verne and fleyng, with wynde wasteth and ouercaseth. Therwyl suche glorye ought to be hated. If gentylleſſe be a clere thynge, renome and glorie to enhaunce, as in reckenyng of thy linage, than is gentilleſſe of thy kynne, for why it semeth that gentilleſſe of thy kinne, is but prayseynge and renome that come of thyne auncestres deserres: and yf so be that prayseng and renome of their deserres make their clere gentylleſſe, than mote they nedes ben gentyl for their gentyll dedes, and not thou: for of thy selfe cometh not such maner gentylleſſe, prayseynge of thy deserres. Thanne gentylleſſe of thyne auncestres that forayne is to the, maketh the not gentyll, but ungentyl and reproued, and yf thou contynuest not their gentylleſſe. And therfore a wyse man ones sayde: Better is it thy kynne to ben by the gentyled, than thou to glorifye of thy kynnes gentylleſſe, and haste no deserte therof thy selfe.

Howe passynge is the beaute of fleshly bodyes more flytynge than mouable floures of somer. And yf thyne eyen weren as good as the Lynx, that maye sene thorowe manye stone walles, bothe fayre and foule in their surtayles, of no maner hewe shulde apere to thy syght, that were a foule syght. Than is fayreneſſe by febleſſe of eyen, but of no kynd, wherfore thylke shulde be no way to ꝑ knot: whan thilke is went the knot wendeth after. Lo nowe at al poynes, none of al these thynges mowe perfeyte ben in understandyng, to ben wayes to the duelynge blysse of the knotte. But nowe to conclusion of these maters, beneth these wordes. Every somer is knowe from the wynter: in shorter course drawerh ꝑ dayes of December, than in the moneth of June: The sprynges of Maye faden and folowen in October. These thynges ben not bounden from their olde kynde, they haue not lost her worke of their proper estate. Men of voluntaryous wyl, withsytte that heuens gouerneth. Other thynges suffren thynges pacienly to worche: Man in what estate he be, yet wolde he ben chaunged. Thus by queynthynges blysse is desyred, and the fruite that cometh of these sprynges, nis but anguis and byterr, al though it be a whyle swete, it maye not be with holde, hastely they departe: thus al daye fayleth thynges that fooles wende. Right thus hast thou sayed in thy fyrst reasonynge. He that thynketh to sayle, and dyal ne after the course of ꝑ sterre, de polo antarctico, shal he neuer come northwarde to the contrary sterre of polus articus: of whiche thyng gesse if thou take kepe, thy fyrst out way goyng, prison and exil may be closed. The grounde failed vnderneth, and so hast thou sayed. Also wyght I wene blameth hym that sytteth in misgoing, and secheth redy way of his blysse.

Howe me thynketh (quod she) that it
sufficeth in my shewing the wayes,
by dignite, rychesse, renome,
and power, if thou loke
clerely arn no wayes
to the knotte.

Every argumente lady (quod I tho) that ye han maked in these foze nempned maters, me thynketh hem in my full wytte conveyned, shall I no more yf god wyl in the contrarye be begyled: But fayne wolde I and it were your wyll, blysse of the knotte to me wer declared, I might fele ꝑ better howe my herte myght assente to pursue the ende in seruyce, as he hathe begonne. O (quod she) there is a melodye in heuen, which clerkes clepen armony, but that is not in breakynge of voyce, but it is a maner swete thing of kyndly werchyng, that causeth ioy out of nombre, to reckon, and that is ioyned by reason and

by

by wysedome, in a quantite of proporcyon of
knyttyng. God made al thynge in reason and
in wytte of porporcyon of melody, we mowe
not suffyse to shewe. It is wrytten by great
clerkes & wyse, that in erthly thynges lyghtly
by studye and by trauayle, the knowynge
may be getten: but of such heuenly melody,
moche trauayle wol bringe out in knowyng
right lytel. Swetenesse of this paradise hath
you tauyshed, it semeth ye slepten, rested fro
al other diseases, so kyndely is youre hertes
therin ygrounded. Wysse of two hertes in
ful loue knytte, maye not aright ben ymagyned: ruer is their contẽplacio i ful of thoughty studye to pleasaunce, matter in byngynge,
comforte euerych to other. And therfore of
erthly thynges, moche matter lightly cometh
in your lernyng. Knowledge of vnderstandig
that is nyghe after eye, but not so nyghe the
courtyse of knyttynge in your hertes: More
souerayn desyre hath euery wight in litel herynge of heuenly conynge, thanne of moche
materyal purposes in erthe. Right so it is in
propertie of my seruauntes, that they been
more affyched in sterynge of lytell thynge in
hys desyre, than of mokell other matter, lasse
in hys conseyence. Thys blysse is a maner of
sowne delycious, in a queynt voyce touched,
and no dynne of noyse: there is none impressyon of breakynge laboure. I canne it not
otherwyse nemne, for wantynge of pryuye
wordes, but paradyse terrestre ful of delycyous melody, withouten trauayle in sown perpetuel seruyce in ful ioye coueyted to endure.
Only kynde maketh hertes in vnderstanding
so to slepe, ẏ otherwyse may it not ben nempned, ne i other maner names for lykyng swetenesse can I nat it declare, al sugre & honye, al
mynstralsy & melodye ben but soote and galle
in cõparison by no maner proporcio to reken,
in respecte of this blysful ioy. This armony,
this melody, this perdurable ioy may nat be i
doynge, but betwene heuens and elementes,
or twey kindly hertes, ful knit in trouth of natural vnderstandynge, withouten wenynge & discrit, as heuens & planettes, which thinges
cõtinually for kindely accordaũces, forbereth
al contrarious meuynges, that in to passyue
diseasrs may sowne, euermore ir thrysteth after more werkyng. These thynges in proporcion be so wel ioyned, that it vndoth al thing,
whiche in to badnesse by any way may be acõpted. Certes (qõ I) this is a thig precious
and noble. Alas that falsenesse euer or wantrust shulde euer be maynteyned, this ioye to
doyde. Alas that euer any wretch shulde thorowe wrathe or enuy, tangling dare make to
shoue this melody so farre abacke, that opẽly
dare it not ben shewd: surely wretches ben fulfylled with enuy & wrathe, and no wight eis.
Flebring & tales i such wretches dare appere
opẽly in euery wightes eare, with ful mouth
so charged, mokel malyce moued many innocẽtes to shẽde, god wold their soule therwith
were stragied. Lo, trouth in this blisse is hyd
and oueral vnder couert him hydeth: he dare
nat come a place for wayting of shrewes.
Cõmenly badnesse, goodnesse amaistereth wh
my selfe & my soule this ioye wolde I bye, yf
the goodnesse were as much as the nobley in
melody. O (qõ she) what goodnesse may be a
cõpted more i this material world, truly non
that shalt thou vnderstãde. Is not euery thig
good that is cõtrariant and distroyeng yuell.
Howe eis (qõ I) Enuye, wrathe, & falsenesse
ben general (qõ she) & that wot euery man beyng in hys right mynde, the knotte the which
we haue in thys biesse, is contrayaunt and
distroyeth such maner yuels. Ergo it is good.
what hath caused any wight to do any good
dede? Fynde me any good, but if this knotte
be ẏ chefe cause: Nedes more it be good, that
causeth so many good dedes. Euery cause is
more, and worthyer than thynge caused, and
in that mores possessyon, al thinges lesse ben
compted. As the kyng is more thã his people
and hath in possessyon all hys realme after:
Right so the knot is more than al other goodes, thou myght recken al thinges lasse, and
that to him longeth owethe in to hys mores
cause of worshyp and of wyl do tourne, it is
eis rebel and out of his mores defendynge to
doyde. Right so of euerye goodnesse in to the
knot and in to ẏ cause of his worshyp oweth
to tourne. And trewly euery thyng that hath
beyng profytably is good, but nothing hath
to ben more profytably than this knot: Kynges it maintaineth, and hem their powers to
mayntayne: It maketh mysse to bene amended with good gouernaunce in doyng. It closeth hertes so togyder, ẏ rancour is out thrysten. Who that it lẽgeth kepeth, lengest is gisded. I trowe (qõ I) hertykes, and mysse
meanyng people hence forwarde woll maintaine this knotte, for therthorough shul they
ben maintayned, and vtterly woll turne, and
leaue

leane their olde yuel vnderstanding, & lerne this goodnesse and prayer so ferre vnseruyse, that name of seruauntes myght they haue. Their langles shall cease, me thynketh hem lacketh marre nowe to alegge. Certes (quod Bone) if they of good will thus turned as thou sayst wolde trewely perfourme, yet shul they be abled party of this blisse to haue: and they wol not, yet shul my seruauntes þ werre well fastey ne trauayn helpe of maintenaunce to the ende. And they for their good trauayle shulle in re warde so ben meded, that rudenesse ioye body and soule togyther in this shulden abyden, there is euer action of blisse without possible corrupcion, ther is actiõ perpetuel in werke without trauayle, there is euerlasting passyfe, without en anye of labour: contynuel plyte without enuyng coueyted to endure.

No tunge may tel ne herte may thinke þ leest poynte of this blisse. God byn ge me tyrder (qõ I than). Contynueth well (qõ she) to the ende, & thou might not fayle than, for though thou spede not here, yet shal the passyon of thy martred lyfe ben writtem, and radde to forne the great Jupyter that god is of routhe, an hyghe in the holown esse of heuen, there he sit in his trone: and euer thou shalt forwarde ben holden amonge al these heuyns for a knyght, that myghtest with no penaunce ben discomfyted. he is a verye martyr that lyuingly gooynge is gnawen to the bones. Certes (qõ I) these ben good wordes of cõforte, a litel myn herte is reioyfed in a merry wyse. Ye (qõ she) and he that is in heuen felyth more ioye, than whan he firste herde therof spehe. So it is (qõ I) but wyll I the soth, that after disease comforte wolde folowe with blysse, so as ye haue often declared, I wolde wel suffre this passion with the better chere, but my thoughte ful sorowe is endlesse, to thynke howe I am cast out of a welfare, & yet dayret not this yuel none hert none hede to me warde throwe, which thynges wold greatly me by wayes of comforte dispost, to werken in my selfe a lyterll with other me ben ymoued: and my sorowes peysen not in her balaunce the weyght of a perse: Slynges of her daunger, so heuily peysen, they drawe my causes so hye, that in her eyen they semen but lyght and right litel.

O, for (qõ she) heuen with skyes that soule clowdes maken & darke wethers, with great tempestes and huge, maketh the mery dayes with sorie shyning sonnes. Also the yere with drawerh flowres and beaute of herbes and of erth. The same yeres maketh syringes & lyte in tiere so to renouel with peynted colores, that erthe semed as gay as heuen. Yes that blasteth & with wawes throwerh shypes, of which the lyuyng creatures for grete peryl of hem dreden: right so þ same seres maketh smothe waters and golden saylyng, and comforterh hem with noble hauen that fyrste were so ferde. Hastr thou not (qõ she) lerned in thy youth that Jupiter hath in his wardrobe bothe garmentes of ioye and of sorowe. What wost thou howe soone he wol turne of the þ garmente of care, & clothe the in blysse parde it is not ferre fro the. Lo an olde prouerbe alleged by manye wyse: Whan bale is greatest, than is bote a nyghe bote. Herest wyst thou dismaye hoze wel and ferne wel, and that shal the saue, with thy good byleue. Ye, ye (quod I) yet se I not by reason howe this blysse is comming, I wot it is comingh, it maye fal an other. O (qõ she) I haue me hel to done to clere thyne vnderstandyng and boyde these errours out of thy mynde, I wol proue it by reason thy wo may not alway en duren. Euery thynge kyndely (qõ she) is gouerned & ruled by the heuenly bodyes, which hauen ful werchynge here on erth, and after courle of these bodyes, al course of your doynges here ben gouerned and ruled by kynd. Thou wost wel bi cours of planettes al your dayes prorden, & to euerich of singuler bores be enterchaũged stondmele about, by sub mytted worchyng naturelly to suffre, of whiche chaũges cometh these trãsitorye tymes: maketh reuoluyng of your yeres thus stondmele, euerych ful myght of worchynge, al seuen han had her cours about. Of whose worchynges & possessyon of houres, þ dayes of the weke haue take her names, after denomination of these seuen planettes. Lo your sonday gineth at þ firste houre after noone on the saturday, in which houre is than the sonne in ful might of worchynge, of whom sonday taketh his name. Next hem foloweth Venus & after Mercurius, & than the Moone, so than Saturnus, after whõ Jouis, & than Mars and ayen thã the Sonne, & so forthe be. xxiiii houres togyder, in which houre gyuing in þ seconde day stante the Moone, as maister for that time to rule, of whom mõday taketh his name, and this course foloweth of al other dayes generally in doyng. This course of al

rule

ture of these bodyes chaungyng, styuen at a certayne terme, lymytted by their first kinde, and of hem al gouernementes in this elemented worlde proceden, as in sprynges, constellacions, engendrures, & al that folowen kynde and reson, wherfore the course that foloweth frowe and ioy, kyndely moten entrechangen their times, so that alway on wele as alway on wo may not endure. Thus seest thou apertly thy sorowe into wele mote ben chaunged, wherfore in such case to better side euermore enclyne thou shuldest. Trewly next the ende of sorowe anon entreth ioy, by maner of necessyte it wol be may non other betyde, and so thy contygence is disproued: if thou holde this opynió any more, thy wyt is right leud. Wherfore in ful conclusion of al this, thylke Margarite thou desyrest, hath bē to the dere in thy herte, and for her hast thou suffred many thoughtful disease, herafter shal be cause of mokel myrth and ioye, and loke how glad canst thou bene, and cease al thy passed heuynesse with manyfolde ioyes. And than wol I as blythly here the spekē thy myrthes in ioy, as I now haue yharde thy sorowes and thy complayntes. And if I mowe in aughte thy ioye encrease, by my trouthe on my syde shall nat be leaued for no maner trauayle, that I with al my mightes right blythly wol helpe, and euer ben redy you both to plese. And thā thanked I that lady with all goodly maner þ I worthely coud, and trewly I was greatly trioysed in myne herte, of her fayre behestes, & profered me so be slaw in al that she me wold ordeyne whyle my lyfe lested.

Me thynketh (qō I) that ye haue ryghte wel declared, that way to þ knot shuld not ben in none of these dysproning thynges, and now order of our purpose this asketh, þ ye shuld me shew if any way be thyther, and which thilke way shulde bene, so that openly may be sey, the very bye way in ful confusion of these other thynges.

Thou shalte (quod she) vnderstande, that one of these lyues (as I first sayd) euery creature of mankynde is sprongen, and so forth procedeth. These lyues ben thorow names departed in thre maner of kyndes, as bestialyche, manlyche, and resonablyche, of whiche two ben bred by fleshely bodye, and the thyrde by his soule. Bestyal amonge resonables is forboden in euery lawe and euery secte, bothe in christen and othre, for euery wight dispiseth hem that lyueth by lustes and delites, as him that is thral and bounden seruaunte to thynges right foule, suche ben compted werse thā men, he shal nat in their degre ben rekened, ne for suche one alowed. Heritykes sayne they, chosen lyfe bestial, that voluptuously lyuen, so that (as I first sayde to the) in manlye and resonable lyuinges, our mater was to declare, but manly lyfe in lyuynge after fleshe or eis fleshly wayes to chese, may nat blysse in this knotte be cóquered, as by reasō it is proued. Wherfore by resonable lyfe he must nedes it haue, sithe a way is to this knotte, but nat by the firste tway liues, wherfore nedes mote it ben to the thirde, and for to lyue in fleshe but nat after flesche, is more resonablich thā manlyche rekened by clerkes. Therfore how this way cometh in, I wol it blythely declare.

Se now (quod she) that these bodyly goodes of manliche lyuinges, yelden sorowfully stoundes and smertāde houres. Who so well remēbre him to their endes, in their worchinges they ben thoughtful and sorie. Right as a bee that hathe had hys honye, anone at hys flight begynneth to stynge: So thylke bodyly goodes at the laste mote awaye, and than stynge they at her goynge, wherthroughe entreth and clene voydeth al blysse of this knot.

Forsothe (quod I) me thynketh I am well serued, in shewyng of these wordes. Althouz I hadde lytel in respeste amonge other great and worthy, yet had I a faire parcell, as me thought for the tyme, in fortherīng of my sustenaūce, which while it dured, I thought me hauynge mokell hony to myne estate. I had richesse sufficiauntly to weyue nede, I had dignite to be reuerenced in worship. Power me thought that I had to kepe fro myn enemyes and me semed to shyne in glory of renome as manhode asketh in meane, for no wyghte in myne administracion coude non yuels ne trechery by sothe cause on me putte. Lady your selue weten wel, that of tho cōfederacies maked by my sourayns I nas but a seruaunt, and yet mokell meane folke wol fully ayenste reason tylke maters mayntayne, in whyche mayntenaunce glozien them selfe, and as often ye hauen sayde, therof ought nothynge in yuel to be laide to mewardes, sithen as repētaunt I am tourned, and no more I thynke, neither tho thinges ne none suche other to sustene, but vtterly distroye without medlynge

maner, in all my myghtes. Howe am I nowe cast out of al swetnes of blysse, & mischeuously stongen my passed ioy. Sorowfully muste I bewayle, and lyue as a wretche.

Euery of tho ioyes is tourned in to his contrarye: For richesse nowe haue I pouerte, for dignite nowe am I enprysoned, in stede of power wretchednesse I suffre, and for glorye of renome I am nowe dispised, and foulych hated: thus hath farn fortune, that sodaynly am I ouerthrowen, & out of al welthe dispoyled. Trewly me thinketh this way in entre is rizt harde, god graunt me better grace er it be all passed, the other way ladye me thought right swete. Nowe certes (qõ Loue) me lyste for to chide. What ayleth thy darke dulnesse wol it not in clerenesse bene sharped. Haue I nat by many reasons to the shewed such bodyly goodes fayien to yeue blysse, their myght so ferforthe woll not stretche. Shame (qõ she it is to say) thou lieſt in thy wordes. Thou ne hast wyst but righte fewe, þ these bodyly goodes had al atones, cõmenly they dwellen not togider. He that plente hath in riches, of his kinne is a shamed: another of lynage ryght noble & wel know, but pouerte him hãdleth he wer le uer unknowe. Another hathe these, but renõe of peoples prayssyng may he not haue, overal he is hated & defamed of thynges right foule. Another is faire & semely but dignite him fayleth: & he that hath dignite is croked or lame, or els mischapẽ & fouly dispysed. Thus partable these goodes dwellẽ cõmenly in one household ben they but slide. Lo how wretched is your trust, on thing þ wol not accorde. We thinketh thou clepest thilk pryte thou were in felynes of fortune, & thou sayest for that that felynes is departed, þ arte a wretch. Than followeth this upon thy wordes, euery soule resonable of man, maye nat dye, & if dethe endeth felynesse & maketh wretches, as nedes of fortune maketh it an ende. Than soules after deth of the body in wretchednes shulde lyuen But we knowe many that han geten þ blysse of heuen after their dethe. How thã may this lyfe maken men blyssful, that whan it passeth it yeueth no wretchednesse, and manye tymes blysse, if in this lyfe he con lyue as he shulde. And wolte thou acõpt with fortune, þ nowe at he first she hath done the tene & sorowe: if þ loke to the maner of al glad thinges & sorowful, thou mayst not nay it, that yet, & namelye nowe thou stãdest in noble pryte in a good gi-

uyng, with good forth going herafter. And if þ wene to be a wretch for suche welth is passed, why than art thou nat wel fortunate for badde thinges & angrys wretchednes dẽ passed. Art thou nowe come first in to the hotery of this lyfe, or els the both of this worlde, art thou nowe a sodayne gest in to this wretched exile. Weneſt there be any thinge in this ruy stable. Is nat thy first aresk passed, þ brought the in mortal sorowe. Bene these not mortall thinges agon with ignorance of beestiall wit and hast receyued reason in knowyng of vertue. What cõforte is in thy hert the knowig lyberly in my seruyce be groũded. And woste thou not wel as I sayde, þ deth maketh ende of al fortune. What than, stãdest thou in noble pryte, lytel hede or reckyng to take, if thou let fortune passe dynge, or els þ she fly whan her lyst, now by thy lyue. Hardy a man hath nothyng so lefe as his lyfe, & for to holde that he doth al his cure & diligent trauayle. Than say I thou arte blyssfull & fortunate sely, if I know thy goodes that thou hast yet be lourh whiche nothinge may doute, that they ne ben moze worthy than thy lyfe. What is that (qõ I) Good contẽplacion (qõ she) of well doyng in vertue to tyme comyng, both in pleasaunce of me & of thy Margarite perle: Hastely thy hert in ful blysse with her shalbe eased. Therfore dismay the nat, fortune I hate grevously ayenst thy bodyly person, ne yet to gret tẽpest hath she not smit to the, sithen the holding cables & ankers of thy life, holden by hertyng so faste, that thou discomforte the nought of tyme that is now, ne dispayre the not of time to come, but yeuen the comfort in hope of well doyng, and of gettyng agayne the double of thy lesyng, with encreasyng loue of thy Margarite perle therto. For this hiderto thou hast had al her ful daunger, and so thou might amende al that is myssse, and all defautes that somtyme thou dyddest, and that now in al thy tyme to that like Margarite in ful seruyce of my lore thyne hert hath continued, wherfore she ought moche the rather encline fro her daungerous sete. These thynges ben yet holden by the holdyng anker in thy lyfe, and holden mote they: To god I pray al these thinges ful ben performed. For while this anker holdeth I hope thou shalt safely escape, & while thy trewe meanyng seruyce about bringe. I dispyte of all falſe meaners, that the of newe haten, for thys trewe seruice thou arte nowe entred.

ented.

Certes (quod I) amonge thynges I asked a question, whyche was the way to the knot. Trewly lady howe so it be, I tempte you with questyons & answeres, in speking of my first seruice, I am nowe in full purpose in the pricke of ꝑ hert, that thilke seruice was an emprisonment, & alway bad & naughtye in no maner to be desyred. Se that in getting of the knot, may it not thyng auayle. A wyse gentyll hert loketh after vertue, & none other bodyly ioyes alone. And because to forme this, in tho wayes I was set, I wot wel my self I haue erred, & of the blysse fayled, and so out of my way hugely haue I ron. Certes (qõ she) that is sorth, & there thou hast mistwent, ere the we ꝑ parte from hence forwarde I rede. Wõder I trewly why the mortall folke of this world seche these wayes outforth, & it is preued in your self. Lo how ye ben cõfoũded wt errour and folly. The knowing of very cause & way is goodnesse & vertue. Is there any thinge to the more precious than thy self? Thou shalt haue in thy power, that ꝑ woldest neuer lese and that in no way may be taken fro the, and thilke thing is that is cause of this knot. And if de the mowe it not reue more than an erthly creature, thilke thinge than abydeth with thy self soule. And la our cõclusion to make such a knot thus gotten, abydeth with thys thyng and with ꝑ soule, as long as they last. A soule dieth neuer, vertue & goodnes euermore with ꝑ soule endureth, & this knot is perfite blisse. Than this soule in this blysse endlesse shal enduren. Thus shull hertes of a trewe knot be eased: thus shul their soules bẽ pleased: thus perpetually in ioye shull they syngen. In good trouth (qõ I) here is a good beginninge, reue vs more of thys waye. (Qõ she) I said to the not longe sithen, that resonable lyfe was one of thre thinges, & it was proued to the soule. Euery soule of reasõ hath two thinges of seruyng lyfe, one in vertue & another in the bodily worshynge: & whan the soule is the maister ouer the body, than is a man master of hym self: & a man to be a mayster ouer hym self, lyueth in vertue & in goodnesse, & as reson of vertue techeth. So ꝑ soule & ꝑ body worshig vertue togider lyuẽ resonable life, which clerkes clepen felycite i lisyng, & therin is the bye way to this knot. These olde philosophers ꝑ hadden no knowing of diuine grace of kyndly reason alone, wenden that of pure nature, without any helpe of grace, me might haue yshoned thother lyuinges, resonably haue I liued: and for I thynke herafte, yf god woll (& I haue space) thylke grace after my leude knowyng declare: I leaue it as at thys time. But (as I said) he that out forth loketh after the wayes of this knot, comyng with which he shuld knowe ꝑ way inforth slepeth for the tyme, wherfore he that wol this way know, must leaue the lokyng after false wayes outforth, & open the eyen of his conscyence & vnclose his herte. Seest nat he that hath trust in the bodily lyfe is so besy bodilye woundes to anoynt in keping from smert (for al out mayne they not be healed) that of woũdes i his true vnderstanding he taketh no hede, the knowig euen forth slepeth so hard, but anon as in knowing a wake, than ginneth the pryny medicines for healyng of his trew entent, inwardes lyghtly healeth cõscience if it be well handled. Than must nedes these wayes come out of ꝑ soule by steryng lyfe of the body, & els maye no man come to perfyte blis of this knotte: & thus by this waye he shal come to the knotte, and to the perfite selinesse that he wend haue had i bodily goodes outforth. Ye (qõ I) shal he haue both knot, riches, power, dignite, & renome in this maner waye. Ye (qõ she) ꝑ shalt I shew the. Is he nat riche ꝑ hath sufficiaũce, and hathe the power that no man may amaistrien. Is not great dignite to haue worship and reuerence & hath he nat glory of renome whose name perpetual is durig, & oute of nõbyr in cõparacyõ. These be thinges that men wenen to gettẽ outforth (quod I). Ye (qõ she) they that loken after a thynge that nought is therof in al ne in partie, long mow thei gapen after: That is sothe (qõ I): therefore (qõ she) they that seechen golde in grene trees, & wenen to gader precious stones amonge bynes, and layne her nettes in mountaynes to fyshe, and thinken to hunt i depe sees after hart & hynd, and seechen in erth thilk thynges that surmounteth heuen. What may I of hem saye but folysshe ignorauncе myslederh wandring wretches by vncouth wayes that shulden be forlaten, & maketh hem blynde fro the right pathe of trewe way that shulde ben vsed. Therfore in general errour in mãkynde, departeth thilk goodes by misse seching, which he shuld haue hole and he sought by reason. Thus goth he begiled of that he sought, in his bodemen ha-

ne blowe a tape. Nowe (qõ I) yf a manne be bertuous & al in bertue lyueth, how hath he al these thinges. That shal I proue (qõ she) how hat power hath any man to let another of lyuyng in bertue, for prisõment or any other disese, he take it paciẽtly, discõfiteth he not, ꝑ tyraunt ouer his soule no power maye haue. Than hath that man so tourmẽted suche power, ꝑ he nyl be discõfit, ne ouercome maye be not ben, sithen paciẽce i his soule ouercometh, and as not ouercomen. Suche thyng ꝑ maye nat be a maistred, he hath nede to nothing, for he hath sufficiaunce ynowe to helpe him selfe. And thilke thing that thus hath power & sufficiaunce, & no tyraunt may it reue, & hath dignite to sette at naught al thynges, here it is a great dignite that deth may a maistry. Wher fore thilk power sufficiaunce so enclosed with dignite, by al reason renome must haue. Thus is thilke riches with sufficiãce ye shuld loke after: this is thilke worshypful dignite ye shuld coueyt: this is thilke power of myght, in whi che ye shuld truste: thys is the like renome of glory that endeles endureth, & all nys but sub stiaunce in vertuous lyuyng. Certes (quod I) al this is soth, & so I se wel that bertue with ful gripe encloseth al these thiges. Wherfore in sothe I maye saye, by my trouth, bertue of my Margarite brought me first in to your ser uice, to haue knytting with that iewel, not so dayn longinges ne folkes smale wordes, but onely our cõuersation togider: & thã I seyng thentent of her trewe menyng with stedfastnes bertue of pacience, that she vsed nothynge in yuel, to quite the wicked leasinges that false tõges ofte in her haue layde, I haue sey it my selfe, goodly forzeuerneslle hath sprong out of her hert, vnite & accord aboue al other thiges she desyreth in a good meke maner, and suffe reth many wicked tales.

TRewly lady to you it were a gret wor ship, that suche thinges by due chastyse mente were amended. Ye (qõ she) I haue the excused, al suche thynges as yet nowe not be redressed: thy Margarytes bertue I com mende wel the more that pacyently such anoyes suffreth. Dauid king was meke & suffred mokel hate & many yuel speches: no despite ne shame that his enemys him deden, myght not moue paciẽce out of his herte, but euer in one pyse merry he vsed. Wherfore god hi selfe to be reward to the thynges, & theron suche pu nyshment let fal. Trewly by reason it ought be ensãple of drede to al maner peoples mirth I mean dẽgeable in wrath no gouernaunce in punishment ought to haue. Plato had a can se his seruaũt to scourge, & yet cleped he his neybour to performe ꝑ doyng, hym self wold not, lest wrath had him a maistred, & so myght he haue layd on to moche: euermore groũded bertue sheweth thentent fer win. And trewly I wotte well for her goodnes & bertue, thou hast desyred my seruice to her plesante well ꝑ more, & thy selfe therto fully hast profered. Good ladye (qõ I) is bertue the hye waye to this knot, that long we haue yhandled, ye for soth (qõ she) and without bertue goodly this knot may not be gotten. Ah nowe I se (quod I) how bertue in me fayleth & I as a leef re without burionyng or fruit alwaye welke, & so I stonde in disheyse of this noble knot, for bertue in me hath no manner worshynge. I wyde where aboute haue I trauayled. Peace (qõ she) of thy first waye thy trauayle is in ydel, & as touchyng the seconde way, I se wel thy meanynge. Thou woldest cõclude me ꝑ coudest, bycause I brought the to seruice, and euery of my seruãtes I bring to come to this blysse, as I sayd here before: & thou sayest thy selfe, thou mightest nat be holpen as thou wenyst, bycause that bertue in ꝑ fayleth. And this blysse perfitly thout bertue maye not be gotẽ, thou wenest of these wordes cõtradicti on to folowe. Parde at the hardest I haue no seruant but he be bertuous in dede & thought I brought the in my seruice, yet art thou not my seruant: but I say, thou might so werche in bertue herafter, that than shalt thou be my seruaunt, and as for my seruaunt acompted. For habyte maketh no monke, ne wearynge of gylte spurres maketh no knyghte. Neuer the later, in confort of thyne herte, yet wol I otherwyse answere. Certes lady (qõ I tho) so ye must nedes, or els I had nyghe caught suche a cordiacle for sorow, I wotte it wel I shulde it neuer haue recouered. And therfore nowe I praye to enforme me in this, or els I holde me without recouerye. I may not long endure tyll this lesson be lerned, and of thys mischefe the remedy knowen. Nowe (quod she) be nat wrothe, for there is no man on lyue that maye come to a precious thyng long coueyted, but he somtyme suffre tenefull dis eases, and wenyst thy selfe to bene bnlyche to all other, that maye not bene: And wyth the

more

more sorowe that a thing is getten, the more he hath ioye, the like thing afterwardes to kepe, as it fareth by chyldren in schole that for learnynge arne beaten, whan their lesson they forgetten, cómenly after a good disciplynyng with a yerde, they kepe right well doctryne of theyr schole.

RIght wt these wordes, on this ladye I threwe vp myne eyen to se her countenaunce and her chere, & she aperceyuing this fantasye in myn hert, gan her semblaunt goodly on me cast, and said in this wise.

It is wel knowe, bothe to Reason and experyence in doynge, euery actiue worcheth on his passyue, and whan they ben togyder, actyue and passyue ben ycleaped by these philosophers, if fyre be in place chafynge thynge able to be chafed or hete, and thylke thynges ben sette in such a distaunce that the one may werche, the other shall suffre. Thylke Margarite thou desyrest is ful of vertue, and able to be actiue in goodnes: but euery herbe sheweth his vertue outforthe from wythin, the sonne yeueth lyght that thynges may be sey. Euery fyre heteth thilk thing that it neighed and it be able to be hete, vertue of thys Margarite outforth worethe, and nothyng is more able to suffre worchyng or worke catche of ꝑ actyfe, but passyfe of the same actyfe, and no passyfe to vertues of this Margaryte, but ꝑ in all my doner can I fynde, so that her vertue muste nedes on the werche, in what place euer thou be, within distaunce of her worthynesse, as her very passyfe thou arte closed: but vertue may the nothynge profyte, but thy desyre be performed and all thy sorowes ceased. Ergo through werchynge of her vertue thou shalte easely ben holpen and driuen out of all care, and welcome to this longe by the desyred. Lady (quod I) thys is a good lesson in gynnyng of my ioye: but were ye well forthe, though I suppose she haue moche vertue, I wolde my spousayle were proued, and than maye I lyue out of doute, and reioyce me greatly in thynkyng of tho vertues so shewed. I herde the say (quod she) at my begynnyng whan I receyued the firste forth letter that thy iewel, thylke Margaryte thou desyrest, was closed in a muske wyth ablewe shell. Ye forsothe (quod I) so I sayd, and so it is. Wel (quod she) euery thyng kyndly sheweth it selfe, this iewel closed in a blewe shell, excellence of coloures sheweth vertue from within, and so euery wight shulde rather loke to the proper vertue of thynges, than to hys forayne goodes. If a thyng bee engendred of good mater, comenly and for the more parte it foloweth after the congelement vertue of the first mater, and it be not corrupt with vyces, to procede wt encrease of good vertues: eke right so it fareth of badde. Trewly great excellence in vertue of lynage, for the more parte discendeth by kynde to the successyon in vertues to folowe. Wherfore I saye, the colours of euery Margarit sheweth frō wiethin the fynesse in vertue. Kyndely heuen whan mery wether is a loke, apereth in mānes eye of coloure in blewe, stedfastnesse in peace betokenyng within and without: Margarite is engendred by heuenly dewe, and sheweth in it selfe by fyneneſſe of coloure, whether the engendrure were maked on morowe or on euen: thus saith kynde of this perle. This precious Margarite that thou seruest, sheweth it selfe discended by nobley of vertue frome this heuenlych dewe, norished and congeled in mekenesse, that mother is of all vertues, and by werkes that men sene withouten the signyfication of the coloures, ben shewed mercy and pitie in the herte wyth peace to all other, and all this is yclosed in a muskle, who so redyly these vertues loken. All thing that hath soule is reduced into good by meane thynges, as thus: Into god man is reduced by soules resonable, and so forthe beestes or bodyes that mowe not mouen, after place ben reduced into manne, by beestes meue that mouen from place to place: so that thylke bodyes that han felynge soules, and moue not frome places, holden the lowest degree of soulyng thynges in felynge, and suche bene reduced into man by meanes. So it foloweth, the muskle as mother of al vertues, halte the place of mekenes to hys lowest degree discendeth down of heuen, and there by a maner of virgyne engendrure arne these Margarytes engendred, and afterwarde congeled. Made not mekenesse so lowe the hie heuen to encloſe & catche out therof so noble a dew, that after congelement a Margarite wyth endeles vertue and euerlastyng ioy was with ful vessell of grace yeuen to euery creature, that goodly wolde it receyue. Certes (quod I) these thynges bene right noble, I haue er this herde these same

lawes. Than (quod she) thou wost well these thinges ben sothe. Ye forsothe (qꝺ I) as the full. Nowe (quod she) that thys Margarite is ful of vertue it is wel proued, wher fore some grace, some mercye amonge other vertues, I wotte ryghte wel on the thal discende. Ye (quod I) yet wolde I haue better declared vertues in this Margarite, kindely to ben grouꝺed. That shal I shew ꝓ (qꝺ she) and thou woldest it lerne. Learne (quod I) what nedeth suche wordes: Wete ye not wel lady your selfe that all my cure, all my dyligence, and al my might haue turned by your counsayle, in plesaunce of that perle, all my thought and all my study, with youre helpe desyreth, in worshyp thilke iewel to encrease al my trauayle and all my besynesse in youre seruyce, this Margaryte to gladde in some halue: me were leauer her honoure, her plesaunce, and her good chere thorowe me for to be mayntayned and kepte, and I of suche thynge in her lykynge to be cause, than al the welthe of bodyly goodes ye coude recke. And wolde neuer god, but I put my selfe in great ieopertye of al that I wouꝺe, that is nowe no more but my lyfe alone, rather than I shulde suffre thylke iewel in any poynte ben blemisshed, as ferre as I may suffre, & with my mighes stretche. Suche thinge (qꝺ she) may mokel further thy grace, and the in my seruyce auannce. But nowe (quod Loue) wylte thou graunte me thilke Margaryte to ben good. O good good (qꝺ I) why tempte ye me and tene wyth suche maner speche: I wouꝺe graunte that, though I shuld anone dye, and by my trouth fight in the quarel, yf any wight wold cõtrepleꝺe. It is so moche the lyghter (qꝺ loue) to proue our entent.

Ye (quod I) but yet wolde I here how ye wolde proue that she were good by reasonable skyl, that it mowe not ben denyed, for although I knowe and to doeth many other, manyfolde goodnes and vertue in this Margarite bene pynted, yet some men there bene that no goodnes speken: and wher euer your wordes ben herde and your reasons ben shewed, suche yuel spekers lady by auctorite of your excellence, shullen ben stopped and ashamed. And more they that han none acquayntaunce in her persone, yet mowe they knowe her vertues, and ben the more enfourmed in what wyse they mowe set their hertes, whan hem lyste in to your seruyce any entre make: for trewly al this to begynne, I wot wel my selfe that thilke iewel is so precious perle, as a womanly woman in her kynde, in whome of goodnesse, of vertue, and also of anshwerynge. shappe of lymmes, and fetures so wel in al poyntes acordyng, nothynge fayleth: I leue that kynde her made with great studye, for kynde in her person nothyng hath forȝet, and that is wel sene. In euery good wightes hert she hath grace of cõmendyng and of vertuous prayssyng. Alas that euer kynde made her deedly, saue onely in that I wot well, that Nature in fourmynge of her in nothyng hath erred.

Certes (quod Loue) thou hast wel begonne, and I aske thee this question: Is not in generall euery thynge good. I not (qꝺ I) No (quod she) saue nat god euery thinge ꝓ he made, it were right good. Thã is wõder (qꝺ I) howe yuel thiges comen a place, sithen ꝓ al thiges weren right good. Thus (qꝺ she) I will declare euerich qualyte & euery action, & euerye thinge that hath any maner of beynge it is of god, and god it made, of whome is all goodnes & al beyng, of hym is no badnesse: badde to be is nawght: good to be is somwhat, and therfore good and being is one in understandyng. Howe may this be (quod I) for eftem han shewes me assayed, and mokel badnes therin haue I founꝺe, and so me semeth bad to be somwhat in kynde. Thou shalt (qꝺ she) understande ꝓ suche maner badnesse, whyche is used to purifye wrong doers is somwhat, and god it made and beyng hath, and that is good: other badnes no beyng hath bitrely, it is in the negatyne of somwhat, and that is nawght, and nothynge being. The parties essencial of beyng arne said in double wyse, as that it is, and these parties ben foũd in euery creature, for al thing a this halfe the first beyng is beyng through partycipacion, takyng partie of beyng, so that euery creature is different bytwene beynge and of him through whom it is and his own beyng: right as euery good is a maner of beynge, so is it good to be, and euery thig though it be good it is not of him selfe good, but it is good by that it is ordinable to the great goodnes. This duality after clerkes determinacion is foundē in euery creature

ture, be it neuer so lyngle of onhed. Ye (qd I) but there as it is ylayde that god saue euery thing of hys makynge, and were right good, as your selfe sayde to me not longe tyme syth en. I aske wether euery creature is ylayde good, throughe goodnesse vnfourmed eyther is fourmed, and afterwarde yf it be accepte herely good. I shal saye the (quod she) these great passed clerkes han demyded good in to good beyng alone, and that is nothynge but good, for nothynge is good in that wyse but god. Also in good by participacyon, and that is ycleped good, for farre sette and repzesẽtatyue of goodly goodnesse, and after this manyfolde good is sayd, that is to saye, good in kinde and good in gendze, and good of grace, and good of loye. Of good in kynde Austen sayethe, all that ben ben good: But peraunter thou woldest were wherher of hem selfe it be good, oz els of anothers goodnesse, for naturel goodnesse of euery substaunce is nothyng els than his substauncial beyng, whiche is yclaped goodnesse, after comparyson that he hath to his first goodnesse, so as it is inducta like by meanes i to the first goodnesse. Boece sheweth this thyng at the ful, that this name good is in general name in kynde, as it is cõparysoned generally to hys principal ende, whiche is god knotze of al goodnesse. Euery creature eryeth god hs made, and so they han ful apered to thylke god by affection, such as to hem belongeth: and in this wise al thinges be good of ỹ great god, which is good alone. This wonder thinge (quod I) howe ye haue by many reasons proued my first waye to be errour and misgoynge, and cause of badnesse and feble meanyng in the grounde ye aleged to be roted: whence is it that suche badnesse hath sprynges, sythen al thinges thus in general ben good, and badnesse hath no beynge, as ye haue declared: I wene if al thinges ben good, I might than with the first way in that good haue ended, and so by goodnesse haue comen to blysse in your seruyce desired. All thynge (quod she) is good by beyng in partycipacyon out of the firste goodnesse, whiche goodnesse is corrupte by badnesse, and badde meanyng maners: god hath in good thynges that they ben good by beyng, and not in yuel, for there is absence of rightful loue, for badnesse is nothynge but onely yuell wyl of the hert, and through gyftes of ỹ doer, wherfore at the gynning of the worlde, euery thing by hym selfe was good, and in vniuersal they werne ryght good. An eye oz a hande is fayrer and better in a body sette in hys kyndely place, than from the body diseuered. Euery thyng in his kyndly place beyng kindly, good dothe werche, and out of that place boyded, it dissolueth and is defouled hir selue. Oure noble god in glitterande wise by armony this worlde ordeyned, as in purtreytures storied with colours medled, in whiche blacke and other derke colours cõmenden the golden and the assured paynture, euery putte in kyndely place one besyde another, more for other glytereth: right so lytel fayre maketh right fayre more glozious, and right so of goodnesse and of other thynges in vertue. Wherfore other badde, & not so good perles as this Margaryte that we han of this matter, yeuen by the ayre lytel goodnesse and lytel vertue, ryght mokell goodnesse and vertue in thy Margaryte to been proued, in shynynge wyse to be founde and shewed. Howe shulde euer goodnesse of peace haue bẽ knowe, but yf vnpeace somtyme reygne, and mokel yuel wrothe. Howe shulde merry ben proued and no trespasse were, by due iustification to be punyshed. Therfore grace & goodnesse of a wight is founde, the sorowful hertes in good meanynge to endure, been comforted, knyte and accorde bytwene hertes knytte in ioy to abide. What wenest thou I reioyce oz els accompte hym amonge my seruauntes that pleaseth Pallas, in vndoynge of Mercurye, all be it that to pallas he be knytte by tytle of lawe, not accordyng to the reasonable conscience: & Mercurie in doynge haue grace to ben suffered: oz els hym that weneth the Moone for fayrenesse of the eue sterre. Lo otherwhyle by nightes light of the Moone, greatly comforteth in derke thoughtes and blynde. Vnderstandyng of loue yeueth great gladenesse: Who so lyste no byleue whan a sothe tale is shewed, adewe and a deblys hys name is entred. Wyse folke and worthy in gentrylesse bothe of vertue and of lyuynge, yeuen full credẽce in sothnesse of loue with a good hert, there as good euydence oz experience in doynge sheweth not the contrarye. Thus mightest thou haue ful prese in thy Margaryte goodnesse, by cõmendement of other iewels badnesse, and yuelnesse in doynge. Stoundemele diseases yeueth seueral houres in ioye.

Nowe by my trouthe (quod I) thys is wel

declared that my Margarite is good, for sythen other been good, and she passeth manye other in goodnesse and vertue, wherthroughe by maner necessarye she muste be good: and goodnesse of thys Margaryte is nothynge els but vertue, wherfore she is vertuous, and yf there fayled any vertue in anye syde, there were lacke of vertue: badde nothynge els is ne may be, but lacke and wante of good and goodnesse, and so shulde she haue that same lacke, that is to saye badde, and that maye not be, for she is good, and that is good me thynketh all good: and so by consequence me semeth vertuous and no lacke of vertue to haue. But the Sonne is not knowe but he shyne, ne vertuous herbes but they haue her kynde werchyng, ne vertue but it stretche in goodnesse or profyte to another, is no vertue. Than by al wayes of reason, sythen mercye and pyte ben moste commended amonge other vertues, and they might neuer ben shewed refrethemente of helpe and of comforte, but nowe at my moste nede, and that is the kynde werkynge of these vertues: trewly I wene I shal not varye from these helpes.

Fyre & yf he yeue none heate, for fyre is not demed. The sonne but he shyne, for sonne is not accompted. Water but it wete, the name shal ben chaunged. Vertue but it werche, of goodnesse dothe it fayle, and in to his contrarye the name shall be reuersed, and these ben impossible: wherfore the contradictorie that is necessarye, nedes muste I leue.

Certes (qd̄ she) in thy person and out of thy mouthe these wordes lyen wel to ben sayd, & in thyne vnderstandyng to be leued, as in extent of thys Margaryte alone: and here nowe any speche in conclusyon of these wordes.

In these thynges (quod she) that me lyst nowe to shewe openly, shal be founde the mater of thy sickenesse, & what shal be ꝑ medicyn ꝑ may be thy sorowes lysse & cõfort, as wel ꝑ as al other that amysse haue erred, and out of the way walked, so that any drop of good wyl in amendemente ben dwelled in their hertes. Prouerbes of Salomon openly teacheth, howe somtyme an innocent walked by ꝑ way in blyndnesse of a derke nyght, whom mette a woman (if it be lefely to saye) as a strumpet arayed, redily purueyed in turnynge of thoughtes with veyne iangly nges, and of rest impacient by dissimulacyon of my termes, sayeng in thys wise: come and be we dronken of our swete pappes, vse we couetous collynges. And thus drawen was thys innocent, as an oxe to the larder. Lady (quod I) to me thys is a queynte thynge to vnderstande: I praye you of this parable declare me the entent. Thys innocent (quod she) is a scholer lernynge of my lore in techynge of my bylle, in whiche thynge the daye of hys thought turning enclyneth in to eue, and the sonne of very light fayntynge, maketh darke nyght in hys commynge. Thus in derkenesse of many doutes he walketh, and for blyndnesse of vnderstandynge, he ne wote in what waye he is in: forsothe such one may lyghtly ben begyled. To whome came loue fayned, not clothed of my lyuery, but vnlyke lustye habite, with softe speche and mery, and with fayre honied wordes heretikes and misse meynge people shieren and wympien their recours. Iustin witnesseth of an heretyke that in his first begynnynge he was a man ryght expert in reasons, and swete in his wordes, and the werkes miscorden. Thus fayned loue in her firste werchynges: thou knowest these thynges for trewe, thou hast hem proued by experyence. Somtyme in doyng to thyn own person, in whiche thinge thou haste founde mater of mokel diseace. Was not fayned loue redily purueyed thy wittes to catch and tourne thy good thoughtes? trewly she hath wounded the conscience of manye with florysshinge of mokel iangynge wordes: and good worthe thanked I it for no glose, I am glad de of my prudence thou haste so manye her beyned. To me ate thou muche holden, that in thy kynde course of good meanyng I returne thy minde: I trowe ne had I shewed the thy Margaryte, thou haddest neuer returned. Of firste in good perfyte ioye was euer fayned loue impacient, as the water of Siloe, whiche euermore floweth with stylnesse and priuy noyse, tyl it come nyghe the brinke, and than gynneth it so out of measure to boine, with nouelleries of chaunging stormes, that in course of euery reuynge it is in poynte to spyl al hys circuite of cankes Thus fayned loue priuely at the fullest of hys flowynge, newe stormes debate to arayse. And al be it that Mercurius often with bole vnderstandynge knowen suche perylious matters, yet Venerians so lustye ben and so leude in their

wyttes

wyttes, that in suche thynges right lytel or naught don they seie, and wryten and cryen to their felowes: here is blysse, here is ioye, and thus into one same errour, moste folke they drawen. Come they sayne, and be we dronken of out pappes, that ben fallas and lyenge glose, of whiche nowe they not souke mylke of herte, but deedly venym and poyson corrupcyon of sorowe. Mylke of fallas, is venym of discryte: Mylke of lyenge glose is venym of corrupcyon. Lo what thynge cometh out of these pappes: vse we coueyted collynges, desyre we and meddle we false wordes with sote, and sote with false, trewly this is the sorynesse of fayned loue, nedes of these surfettes sickenesse must folowe. Thus as an oxe to thy langorynge deth wer thou drawen, the sote of ꝑ smoke hath the al defased. Euer the deper thou somtime wadest ꝑ soner thou it sounde: ꝑfit had the kylled it had be lytell wonder. But on that other syde my trewe seruaunt not fayned ne discryue conne, sothly their doynge is open, my foundement endureth, be the burthē neuer so great, euer in one it lasteth: it reueth lyfe and blyssfull goodnesse in the laste endes, though the gynnynges ben sharpe. Thus of two contraryes, contrarye benche effectes. And so thyne Margaryte thou seruest shal sle thee by her seruyce out of perylous tribulacyon delyuered, bycause of her seruyce in to newe disease fallen, by hope of amendemente in the laste ende, with ioye to be gladded, wherfore of kynde pure, her mercy with grace of good helpe shal she graunt, & els I shal her so strayne, that with pyte shal she ben amaystred. Remembre in thyne herte howe horrible soultyme to thyne Margaryte thou trespasest, and in a great wise ayenst her thou forfeytest: clepe ayen thy mynde, and knowe thyne owne gyltes. What goodnesse, what bountye, with moskell folowyng pyte founde thou in that tyme? Where thou not goodly accepted in to grace? by my pluckynge was she to forgyuenesse enclyned. And after I her styred to drawe the to house, and yet wendest thou vtterlye for euer haue ben refused. But wel thou woste, sythen that I in suche sharpe disease myght so greatly auayle, what thynkest in thy wyte howe ferre maye my wytte stretche? And thou lache not on thy side I wol make the knotte: Certes in thy good beryng I wol acorde with the plaunter. I haue founde Dauid in my seruice true, and with holy oyle of peace and of rest longe by hym desyred, vtterly he shal be anoynted. Truste well to me, and I wol thee not sayle. The leanyng of the first way with good herte of continuaunce, that I se in the grounded, this purpose to parfourme, drawyth my by maner of cōstraynyng, that nedes must I ben thyne helper: although myne a whyle be taryed, it shall come at suche season, that thy thought shall been ioyed. And wolde neuer god, sythen thyne herte to my reasones arne assented, and openlye haste confessed thyne awnne gonge, and nowe cryest after mercy, but if mercy folowed: thy blysse shal ben redy iwis, thou ne woste how sone. Now be a good chylde I rede. The kynde of vertues in thy Margaryte reherced, by strength of me in thy person shul werche. Comforte the in this, for thou mayste not miscarye. And these wordes said, she streyght her on length & rested a while

¶ Thus endeth the seconde booke, and here after folowyth the thyrde booke

IF nombre sayne these clerkes that it is naturel some of discrete thinges, as in tellynge one, two, thre, and so forth: but amonge al nombres thre is determined for moste certayne. Wherfore in nombre certayne thys, werke of my besye leudenesse I thynke to ende and parfourme.

Ensample by thys worlde in thre tymes is deuyded: Of whyche the fyrste is cleped Demacion, that is to saye, goyng out of trewway, and al that tho dyeden, in hel were they punyshed for a mans synne, tyll grace & mercy fette hem thence, and there ended the first tyme. The seconde tyme lasteth from the commynge of mercyable grace, vntyl the ende of transytorie tyme, in whiche is shewed ꝑ true way in forbeyinge of the badde, and that is ycleped tyme of grace: and that thynge is not yeuen by deserte of yeldynge one benefyte for another, but onely throughe goodnesse of the yeuer of grace in thilke tyme. Who so can wel vnderstande, is shapen to be saued in soules blysse. The thirde tyme shal gyn whan trāsytorie thinges of worldes han made their ende, and that shal ben in ioye, glorie, and red both

body

body and soule, that wel han deserued in the tyme of grace. And thus in that heuen togyther shul they dwel perpetuelly without any ymagynacyle yuel in any halue. These tymes are figured by the thre dayes that our god was cloſed in perthe, and in the thirde aroſe, the wyage our resurrection, to ioye and blysse of the ꝑ it deserven, by his mercyable grace. To this leude boke in thre maters acordaut to the tymes, lyghtly by a good inſtrt maye ben vnderstande, as in the firſte erroure of myſſe goynge is shewed, with sorowful pyne punyſhed is cryed after mercye. In the seconde is grace in good waye proued, whiche is sayling without deserte, thrike firſt myſſe amendyng in correction of the erroures and euen waye to bryngе, with comforte of welfare into amendemente werynge. And in the thyrde ioye and blysse graunted to hym that wel canne deserue it, and hath sauour of vnderstandynge in the tyme of grace. Thus in toy of my thyrde boke shal the maner be tyl it ende. But ſpecial cause I haue in my herte to make this proeſſe of a Margarit perle, that is so precious a gẽme with clere & litel of whi the stones or iewel, the tonges of vs Englyſh people tourneth ꝑ right names, & clepeth hem Margery perles: thus varyeth our speth frõ manye other langages. For trewely latyn, frenche, and manye mo other langages clepeth hem Margery perles, the name Margarites or Margrite perles: wherfore in ꝑ denomination I wol me accorde to other mens tonges, in that name clepynge. These clerkes that treaten of kyndes, & studien out the propertie there of thynges, sayne the Margarit is a lytel whyte perle, thyroughout holowe & rounde, and vertuous, and on the fre sydes in the more Britayne in muſkle shelles of ꝑ heuenly dewe the best ben engendred: in whiche by experience ben founde thre sayre vertues. One is, it preuyth comforte to the feinge spirites in bodily persones of treason. Another is good, it is profytable helthe ayenſt passyons of sorie mens hertes. And the thirde it is nede ful and noble in staunchynge of bloode, there eis to moche wolde out ren. To whiche perle & vertues me lyſt to liken at thys tyme Philosophy with her thre speces, that is naturel, and moral, and resonable: of whiche thynges herein what sayn these great clerkes. Philosophye is knowyng of deuynly & manly thinges ioyned with studye of good lyuynge, and this stante in two thynges, that is cunnynge and opinion: cunnynge is whan a thynge by certayne reson is conceyued. But wyrtches & fooles and leude men, many wyl conceyue a thyng and mayntayn it as for a sothe, though reson be in the contrarye, wherfore cunnynge is a straunger. Opinion is while a thinge is in non certayne, and bydde ſome mens bery knowlegyng, and by no partyte reason fully declared, as thus: yf the sonne be so moked as men weuen, or eis yf it be more than the erth. For in sothnesse the certayne quantite of that planet is vnknowen to erthly dwellers, and yet by opinion of some menne it is holden for more than mydle erthe. The firſt spece of philosophye is naturel, whiche in kyndely thynges treten, and the werth couses of heuen, and strength of kyndely course: as by arismetrike, geometry, musyke, & by astronomye, techeth wayes and course of heuens, of planetes, and of sterres aboute heuen and erthe, and other elemẽtes. The seconde spece is moral, whiche in order of lyuing maners techeth, and by reson proueth vertues of soule moſt worthy in our liuing, whiche ben prudence, iuſtyce, temperaunce, and strength. Prudence is goodly wisdome in knowyng of thynges. Strength voydeth al aduerſitees alyche euen. Temperaunce distroyeth bestiall lyuinge, with easy bearinge. And iuſtice right fully iugeth, and iuginge departeth to euery wight that is his owne. The thirde spece turneth in to reason of vnderstandyng, al thynges to be sayd forth and discuſſed, & that in two thinges is deuyded: one is art, another is rethorike, in which two al lawes of mans reason ben grounded or eis mayntayned. And for thys booke is al of loue, and therafter beareth his name, and philosophie and lawe muſte here to accorden by their clergial discripcions: as philosophie for loue of wisdome is declared: Lawe for mayntenaunce of peace is holden, and these with loue muſt nedes acordẽ, therfore of hem in this place haue I touched. Order of homly thinges & honeſt maner of liuinge in vertue, with right ful iugemẽt in causes & profitable administracion in communalties of realmes & cities, by cunnyed profitably to raigne, nat by singuler auaũtage ne by pryuy enuy, ne by foleyn purpose in couetiſe of worſhip or of goodes, ben disposed in opẽ rule shewed, by loue philosophy, & lawe, & yet loue rekorn al other. Wherfore as ſuſterne in vnite they acorden

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one ende that is peace & rest, they causen nozis thynge, & in the ioye mayntenen to endure. Nowe than, as I haue declared: my boke acozdeth with descripcio of thze thinges, & the Margarit in vertue is likened to philosophy, with ỳ thze speces. In whiche matters euer twey ben acozdaunt with bodily reson, & the thirde with the soule: But in cõclusyon of my boke & of this Margarite peerle in knytryng togider lawe by thze sõdzie maners shalbe lykened, that is to saye, lawe, right, & custome, whiche I wol declare: al that is law cometh of goddes ozdinaũce by kyndely wozchyng, & thilke thynges ozdained by mãs wittes arne icleped right, which is ozdayned by many maners & in cõstitution wzitten: But custome is a thing that is accepted foz right oz foz law, ther as law and right faylen, & there is no difference, whether it come of scipture oz of reason. Wherfoze it sheweth that lawe is kindly gouernaunce: right cometh out of mãnes pzo bable reason: & custome is of comend sage by length of tyme vsed, & custome nat wzytte is vsage, & if it be wzitte cõstitution it is ywzytten & ycleped: But lawe of kynde is comen to euery nation, as cõiunction of man and woman in loue, successyon of childzen inheritãce restitucion of thyng by strength take oz lent, and this lawe among al other halte the souereynest gree in wurshyp, whiche lawe began at the begynnynge of reasonable creature, it varyed yet neuer foz no chaungyng of tyme: cause forsothe in ozdayning of lawe, was to constrayne mens hardynesse in to peace, and withdzawyng his yuel wyl, and turning malyce in to goodnesse, and that innocence liberly without en teneful anoye amonge thzewes safely might inhabite by pzotection of safeconducte, so that thzewes harme foz harme by vzidle of ferdenesse shulden restrayne. But forsothe in kyndely lawe nothynge is cõmended, but such as goddes wyl hath confirmed, ne nothynge denyed but cõtrayousie of goddes wyl in heuen: eke thanne al lawes oz custome, oz els cõstitution by vsage oz wzitinge that cõtrarien law of kynde, vtterlye ben repugnaunt and aduersary to our goddes wyll of heuen. Trewly lawe of kynde foz goddes own lusty wyl is verily to maintayne, vnder whiche lawe (& vnwozthy) bothe professe and reguler arne obediencer and bounden to this Margarite perle, as by knotte of loues statutes and stablyshment in kynde, whiche that goodly maye not ben withsetten. Lo vnder this bonde am I constrayned to abyde, and man vnder lyuynge lawe ruled: by that lawe oweth after desertes to bẽ rewarded by payn oz by mede, but yf mercye weyue the payne: so than be parte, reasonfully may be sey, that mercy both ryght and lawe passeth, thentent of al these matters is the lest clere vnderstanding, to wetẽ at thende of this third boke ful knowyng thozow goddes grace, I thinke to make neuerthelater, yet if these thynges han a good and a sleight inseer, whiche that canne souke hony of the harde stone, oyle of the dzie rocke, may lightly sele nobley of matter i my leude ymaginacyon closed. But foz my booke shal be of ioye (as I sayd) & I so ferre set fro thilke place, fro whens gladnes shuld come my cozd is to shozt to let my boket ouzt catch of that water, & few men be abouten my cozde to eche, & manye in ful purpose ben redy it shozter to make, & to enclose thenter, that my boket of ioy nothyng shulde catch, but empty returne, my careful sozowes to encrese, & if I dye foz payn, that were gladnesse at their hertes. Good lozde sende me water in to the cop of these mountaynes, & I shal drinke therof, my thzustes to slãch: & sey these be cõfortable welles in to helth of goodnesse of my sauiour am I holpen, And yet I saye moze, the house of ioye to me is not opened. Howe dare my so rouful goost than in anye mater of gladnesse thynken to trete: foz euer sobbynges & complayntes be redy refrete in his meditatiõs, as werbles in manyfold stoũdes cõminge about I not than. And therfoze what maner of ioye coude endite, but yet at doze shal I knocke, if the key of Dauid wolde the locke vnshyt & he bzing me in, which that childzẽs tonges both openeth & closeth. Whose spirite, wher he wel wozcheth, departing goodly as hym lyketh. Now to goddes laude & reuerence, profyt of ỳ reders, amẽdement of maners of ỳ heters encresyng of wozship amonge loues seruaunts, relevyng of my hert in to grace of my iewel, & frendship plesaunce of this perle. I am stered in thys makyng, & foz nothing elz: yf any good thyng to mẽnes liking in this scripture be foũde, thanketh the maister of grace, which ỳ of that good & all other is authour, & principal doer. And if any thyng be insufficiẽt oz els myslyking, with ỳ that the leudnesse of myne vnable cõning, foz body in disease anoyeth the vnderstãding in soule. A diseasely habi-

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tacio letteth ꝑ wittes many thynges, & name ly in sorowe. The custome neuer the later of loue, be lõge time of seruyce in rennes I this to pursue, which ben lyuely to yeue vnderstã dynge in other thynges. But now to enforme the of this Margarites goodnes, I may her not halfe pryse. Wherfore not the for my boke, but this boke for her is worthy to be cõ mended, tho my boke be lewde: right as thiges nat for places, but places for thynges ought to be desyred and praysed.

NOw (qõ loue) truely thy wordes I haue wel vnderstõde. Certes me thinketh hem right good, & me wondreth why ꝑ so lyghtly passest in the lawe. Sothly (qõ I) my wyt is lewde & I am right blinde & that mater depe, howe shuld I than haue waded, lightly mizt I haue drenched & spilt ther my selfe. Yea (qõ she) I shal helpe ꝑ to sowme. For right as lawe punisheth brekers of precepres, & the cõtrary doers of the writen constitucions: right so a cẽward, lawe rewardeth & yeueth mede to hẽ that lawe strengthen. By one lawe this rebel is punished & this innocent is mede, ꝑ thewe is emprisoned & this rizt ful is corowned. The same lawe that ioyneth by wedlok without forsinking, ꝑ same lawe yeueth libel of depar tition bycause of deuorse both demed & decla red. Ye ye (qõ I) I fynde in no lawe to mede and rewarde in goodnes, ꝑ gilte of desertes. Fole (qõ she) gilte cõuerted i your lawe, my kel meryte deserueth. Also Pauly of Rome was corowned, ꝑ by him the mayntenners of Pompeus weren knowẽ & distroyed: & yet to forn was this Paulyn chefe of Põpeus cõ saile. This lawe in Rome hath yet his name of mesuryng in mede, the bewrayeng of ꝑ con spyracy, ordayned by tho senatours the deth. Julius Cesar is acõpted in to Catons right wisnesse, for euer in trouth florisheth hys na me amonge the knowers of reason. Perdicas was corowned in ꝑ heritage of Alexãder the great, for tellynge of a priuy hate that kynge Porrus to Alexander hadde. Wherfore euery wight by reason of lawe after his right wise nes apertly his mede may chalenge: & so thou that mayntenyest lawe of kynde, & therfore disease hast suffred in ꝑ lawe, reward is wor thy to be rewarded & ordayned, & apertly thy mede might thou chalẽge. Certes (qõ I) this haue I wel lerned, & euer hensforward I shal drawe me therafter in onehed of wil to abyde this lawe both mayntenyng & kepe, & so hope I best entre in to your grace, wel deseruinge in o worship of a wight, without nedeful cõpul sion, ought medefully to be rewarded. Truly (qõ Loue) that is sothe, & tho by constitution good seruice i to profite & auãtage stretch, ri terly many men it demen to haue more desert of mede, than good wil nat cõpelled. Se now (qõ I) howe may men holdẽ of this ꝑ contra ry. And what is good seruyce of you wolde I here this question declared. I shall say the (qõ she) in a fewe wordes, resonable worchyn ges in plesaunce & profyte of thy souerayne. How shuld I this performe (qõ I) right wel (qõ she) & here me nowe alytel. It is hardely (qõ she to vnderstãde) that right as mater by due ouerthaũgiges folowerh his perfectiõ & his forme: right so euery man by rizteful wer kynges ought to folewe ꝑ leful desyres i his hert, & se tofore to what ẽde he deserueth, for many times he that loketh nat after thendes, but vtterly therof is vnknowen, befallerh of ten many yuels to don, wherthrough er he be ware shamefully he is confoũded, thende ther of neden to be before loked to euery desire of suche forsight i good seruice thre thinges spe cially nedet, to be rulers in his workes. First that he do good, nexte ꝑ he do by election i his owne hert, & the thirde that he do godly with outẽ any surquedrie in thoughtes. That your werkes shulden be good in seruyce or in any other actes, authorites many may be aleged vnder the latter, by reson thus may it be shewed. If your workes be circled fremde, & mo uen in vertue of the fielde werche, whiche in good workes wrought you to procede, & rizt so your werkes mouen in to vertue of the laſt ende, & right in the first worchynge were nat, no man shulde in the secõde werche. Right so but ye feled to what ende & fro their goodnes closed, ye shuld no more retch what ye wrought but the gymyng gan with good, & there shal it crafte in the laſt ende, if it be wel consydred. Wherfore the myddle, if other wayes it drawe than acordaunt to thendes, there slyntreth the course of good, & another maner course en treth, & so it is a partie by him selue, & euery pert be nat accordãt to his al, is foule & ought to be eschewed, wherfore euery thig that is wrozt & be nat good, is nat accordẽt to thẽ des of his al hole, it is foule, & ought to be with drawe. Thus ꝑ persons that neither don good ne harme, shamen foule their nabyng: Wher

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fore without working of good actes in good seruice, may no man ben accepted. Trewly þ ille þ han might to do good & done it not, the crowne of worthyp shal be take from hem, & þ shame shul they be anulled. And so to make one werke acordant vñ his endes, euery good seruaunte by reason of consequence muste do good nedes. Certes it sufficeth not alone to do good, but goodly withal folowe, the thãke of goodnesse eis in nought he deserueth: For tizt as all your beyng come frõ the greatest good in whom al goodnesse is closed. Tizt so your endes ben directe to the same good. Aristotell determyneth that ende & good ben one, and cõuertible in vnderstãdyng, and he that vn wyll doth away good, & he that loketh not to thẽ loketh not to good, but he that doth good and doth not goodly, drawith away thy directiõ of thende not goodly, must nedes be bad. Lo badde is nothing eis, but absence or negatife of good, as derkenesse is absence or negatyue of lyght. Than he that doth goodly, directeth thilke good in to thende of badde: So muste thyng nat good folowe, ellis badnesse to suche folke ofte foloweth. Thus cõtrariaunt workers of thende that is good, ben worthy þ cõtrary of thẽde that is good to haue. Now (qõ I) may any good dede be done, but if goodly it helpe. Yes (qõ Loue) the deuyl dothe many good dedes, but goodly he leueth behide, for euen badly & in discreuable wyse he worketh. Wherfore the cõtrary of thend him foloweth. And dothe neuer so many good dedes, bicause goodly is away, his goodnes is not rekened. Lo than tho a mã do good, but he do goodly thende in goodnesse woll not folowe, & thus in good seruice both good dede & goodly don muste ioyne togider, & that it be done with free choise in hert: & eis deserueth he nat þ merite in goodnes, that wol I proue. For if thou do any thyng good by chaũce or by happe, in what thing art thou therof worthy to be commẽded, for nothing by reason of that turneth in to thy praysing ne lackyng. Lo thilk thing done by hap by thy wyll is nat caused, & therby shulde I thanke or lacke deserue: & sythen that fayleth, thende which that well shuld reward, must nedes faile. Clerkes sayne, no mã but wyllyng is biessed, a good dede þ he hath done is not done of free choice wylling, wythout whiche blysfulnesse may nat folowe. Ergo nether thãke of goodnesse ne seruice i that is cõtrary of þ good ende, so than to good seruice lõgeth good dede goodly dõ, thorow free choice i hert. Trewly (qõ I) this haue I well vnderstande. Well (qõ she) euery thynge thus done sufficiẽtly by lawe, that is cleped iustice, after reward clayme. For lawe & iustyce was ordayned in this wise, suche decretes in goodnesse after quantite in doynge, by mede to reward, & of necessyte of suche iustyce, þ is to say, rizt wisenes was free choice in deseruing of wel or of yuel graũted to resonable creatures. Euery man hath free arbitremẽt to chose good or yuel to performe. Now (qõ I tho) yf I by my good wyll deserue this Margarite perle & am therto cõpelled, & haue free choise to do what me lyketh: Sythe is than holde as me thynketh to reward thentent of my good wyl. Goddes forbode eis (qõ Loue) no wighe meaneth otherwise I trowe, free wil of good hert after mede deserueth. Hath euery mã (qõ I) free choice by necessary maner of wyl i euery of his doinges, that him lyketh by goddes proper purueyaũce. I wold se that wel declared to my leude vnderstãding, for necessary & necessite ben wordes of moket entẽtion, closyng (as to saye) so mote it be nedes, & otherwyse may it nat betyde. This shalt thou lerne (qõ she) so thou take hede in my speche. If it were nat in mãnes owne lyberte of free will to do good or bad, but to the one teyed by bonde of goddes proordinaũce: Than do he neuer so wel it were by nedeful cõpulciõ of thilk bõde and nat by free choice, wherby nothyng he deserueth, & do he neuer so yuel it were nat man for to wyte, but onelych to him þ suche thyng ordayned him to done. Wherfore he ne ought for bad be punished, ne for no good dede be rewarded, but of necessite of rizt wisnesse was therfore free choice of arbitremẽt put in mans proper disposiciõ: truely if it were otherwyse it cõtraried goddes charite, þ badnes & goodnesse rewardeth after desert of payn or of mede. Me thinketh this wõder (qõ I) for god by necessite forwote al thinges cõming, and so mote it nedes be: & thilke thiges that ben dõ be out free choice comẽ nothig of necessite but onely be wyl: How may this stonde togither, and so me thinketh truely, that free choyce fully repugneth goddes forwetyng. Trewly lady me semeth they mowe nat stande togyther.

Thā gan loue nyghe me nere, & with a no-
ble cōtenance of vysage & limmes, dyr-
sed her nigh my sitting place. Take forth (qō
she) thy pen & redily wryt these wordes, for if
God wol, I shal hē so enforme to ꝑ, ꝑ thy lewd
nesse which I haue vndertāke in that mater,
shal openly be cleered, & thy sight in ful loking
therin amēded. First if thou thynke that god
des prescience repugne liberte of arbetry of ar
bitrement, it is impossible that they shuld ac-
corde in onheed of sothe to vnderstonding. Ye
(qō I) forsothe is. I it cōceyue. Well (qō she)
if thilk impossyble were away, ꝑ repugnāce
that semeth to be therin, were vtterlye remo-
ued. Shewe me the absence of that impossibi-
lyte (qō I). So (qō she I shal). Nowe I sup
pose that they mow stād togider, prescience of
god whō foloweth necessite of thinges cōmig
and lyberte of arbitremēt, thorowe whiche ꝑ
beleuest many thinges to be without necessite.
Both these propocciōs be sothe (qō I) & well
mow stād togider, wherfore this case as pos-
syble I admyt. Truely (qō she) & this case is
impossible. Howe so (qō I). For herof (qō she)
foloweth & wexeth another ipossyble. Proue
me that (qō I). That I shal (qō she) for som
thing is cōming vnout necessite, & god wote ꝑ
rofore, for al thig cōming he before wot, and
that he before wot of necessite is cōmyng: as
he before wot be the case by necessary maner
than, or els thorowe necessite is sothing to be
without necessite, & whiderto euerl wyt that
hath good vnderstanding, is seen these thyn-
ges to be repugnaunt. Prescience of god, whi-
che ꝑ foloweth necessyte & liberte of arbitre-
mēt, fro which is remoued necessyte, for true-
ly it is necessary ꝑ god haue forweting of thig
without any necessyte comyng. Ye (quod I)
but yet remeue ye not away fro myne vnder-
standyng, the necessyte folowyng goddes be-
fore wetyng, as thus. God before wote me
in seruice of loue to be bounden to this Mar
garite perle, and therfore by necessite thus to
loue am I boūd, & if I nat had loued, thorow
necessite had I ben kepte from al loue dedes.
Certes (qō Loue) bicause this mater is good
& necessary to declare, I thinke here in wel to
abyde and not lyghtly to passe. Thou shalte
not (quod she) say al onely god before wote
me to be a louer or no louer, but thus: god be
fore wote me to be a louer wythoute neces-
syte. And so it foloweth whether thou loue or
not loue, euerye of hem is and shall be. But
now thou seest the impossybylite of the case,
and the possibylite of thilk that thou wendest
had ben impossible, wherfore the repugnāce
is avoyded. Ye (quod I) and yet do ye not a
waye the strength of necessyte, whā it is said,
though necessyte it is me in loue to abyde, or
not to loue without necessyte for god before
wote it. This maner of necessyte forsothe se-
meth to some men in to c[illegible]ction, that is to
sayne, constraynyng or els prohibycion thus
is defendynge, wherfore necessyte is me to
loue of wyll. I vnderstande me to be con-
strayned by some pryuy strength to the wil of
louynge, and if no loue to be defended frome
the wyl of louynge, and so thorowe necessyte
me semeth to loue, for I loue, or els not to
loue, if I not loue, wherfor[illegible]our neither thāke
ne mauger in thothynge, may I deserue.

Nowe (quod she) thou shalte well vnder-
stande that often we sayne thynge thorowe
necessyte to be that by no strength to be ney-
ther is coarted ne constrayned, and throughe
necessyte not to be, that wyth no defendynge
is remoued, for we sayne it is thorowe ne-
cessite god to be immortal nought derdyche,
and it is necessyte god to be rightful, but not
that any stregth of violente maner constray-
neth him to be immortal, or defendeth hi to
be vnrightful. For nothig may make him dey-
ly or vnright[illegible]. Right so if I say thorowe ne
cessite is the to be a louer or n[illegible]none, only tho
rowe wyl, as god before were. It is not to
vnderstande ꝑ any thyng defendeth or forbit,
the thy wyl, which shal nat be, or els constray
neth it to be whiche shalbe: that same thynge
forsoth god before wot, which he before seeth
any thing cōmende of onely wyll, ꝑ wyl ney-
ther is constrained ne defended thorow any o-
ther thing. And so thorow lyberte of arbytre
mēt it is do, ꝑ is don of wyll. And trewly my
good childe, if these thinges be wel vnderstōd
I wene that non inconuenyent shalte ꝑ fyn-
de betwene goddes forweting & lyberte of ar
bitremēt, wherfore I wot wel they may stād
togider. Also farthermore, who ꝑ vnderstan-
dyng of prescience properlich considereth, tho-
row ꝑ same wyse ꝑ any thing be afore wyst,
is said for to be cōming it is pronoūced, there
is nothing toforn wyst, but thig coming, fore
weting is but of trouth dout may nat be wist:
wherfore whan I sey that god toforn wot a-
ny thyng, thorowe necessyte is thilke thing to
be comyng, al is one if I sey, if it shalbe, but

this

this necessyte neither cõstrayneth ne defendeth any thing to be or nat to be. Therfore sothlye if loue is put to be, it is said of necessyte to be, or els for it is put not to be, it is affirmed nat to be of necessyte: not for ỳ necessyte cõstrayneth or defendeth loue to be or nat to be. For whan I say, if loue shal be of necessite it shall be, here folowerth necessite. The thing tofore put, it is as much to say, as if it wer thus pronõuced, that thing shalbe: None other thynge signifyeth this necessite but onelye thus, that shalbe may nat togider be & not be. Euelyche also it is sothe, loue was & is, & shalbe, nat of necessyte, & nede is to haue be al that was, & nedeful is to be al that is, & cõming to al that shalbe: & it is nat the same to saye, loue to be passed, and loue passed to be passed, or loue present to be present, and loue to be presente, or els loue to be commynge, and loue commynge to be cõming: diuersite in settynge of wordes, maketh diuersite in vnderstanding, altho in the same sentence they accordẽ of signification, right as it is nat al one: loue swete to be swete, & loue to be swete: for much loue is bitter & sorowful er hertes ben eased, & yet it gladeth thilk sorowful hert on such loue to thynke. Forsothe (qõ I) otherwhile I haue had mokel bysse in hert of loue, ỳ stoũdmele hath me sorily anoyed: & certes lady, for I se my selfe thus [illegible] this margarite perle as by bonde of youre seruice, & of no lyberte of wyl, my hert wyl nowe nat accord this seruice to loue. I can demyn in my selfe none otherwyse, but thorowe necessite am I cõstrained in this seruyce to abyde. But alas than, yf I thorowe nedeful cõpulsioun maugre me be with holde, litel thãke for al my great trauell haue I than deserued. Now (qõ this lady) I saye as I sayde: We liketh this mater to declare at the full, & why: for manye men haue had dyuers fantasyes & reasons, both on one syde therof & in the other. Of whych rizt some I trowe if thou wylt vnderstõde, thou shalte con yeue the sentẽce, to the partie more probable by reason, & in soth knowing, by ỳ I haue of this mater maked an ende. Certes (qõ I) of these thynges longe haue I had great lust to be lerned, for yet I wene goddes wil & his prescience accordeth with my seruice, in louyng of this precious Margarite perle. After whõ euer in my hert w̃ thurlynge desire werre I do brenne: bwaslynge I lãgour & fade, and the day of my destiny in dethe or in ioye I abide, but yet in thende I am comforted be my suppositle in dysse, & in ioye to determyne after my desyres. That thyng (qõ Loue) hasteth ỳ neigh, god graũt of his grace & mercy, and this shalbe my prayer til thou be lykened in herte at thyne owne wyl. But nowe to enforme the in this mater (quod this lady) thou wost where I left, that was loue to be swete & loue swete to be swete, is not all one for to say: for a tree is not alway by necessite white cõtyme er it were white, it myght haue be nat whyte: & after tyme it is whyte, it may be nat whyte: But a white tree euermore nedeful is to be white: for neither tofore ne after it was white, might it be togider white & nat white. Also loue by necessyte is nat present as nowe in the, for er it were present it might haue be that it shulde nowe nat haue be, & yet it maye be that it shal not be present: but thy loue present whiche to her Margarite ỳ hath boũde, nedeful is to be present. Trewly some doyng of action nat by necessyte is cõmynge ferre to forn it be, it may be ỳ it shall nat be cõmynge: thyng forsoth cõmynge nedeful is to be coming, for it may nat be that cõminge shal not be cõming. And rizt as I haue said of present and of future times, the same sentẽce in sothnesse is of the preterit, ỳ is to say time passed for thing passed must nedes be passed, & er it were it might haue nat be, wherfore it shuld nat haue passed. Right so whã loue comynge is sayde of loue ỳ is to come, nedefull is to be that is said, for thing cõmig neuer is nat commynge, & so ofte the same thynge we sayne of the same, as whan we sayne euerye man is a man, or euerye louer is a louer, so muste it be nedes, in no waye maye he be man & no man togider. And if it be not by necessite, that is to say, nedeful al thyng cõming to be commyng, than somthyng cõming is not cõmynge, and that is impossible, right as these termes nedful, necessite, & necessarie betoken and signifynge nedes to be, & it maye not otherwise be. Right these termes impossyble signifieth, ỳ thyng is not & by no way may it be, than thorowe pert necessyte, al thing commyng is commyng, but that is by necessyte, folowerth withnothyng to be constrained. Lo whã that commyng is said of thinge, nat alway thyng thorowe necessite is, altho it be comyng. For if I say to morow loue is cõmyng in this Margarites hert, nat therfore thorow necessite shall ỳlke loue be, yet it may be that it shal nat be,

thyng is wette cõmyng. Neuerthelater, cõtime it is soth that something be of necessite, that is said to come: as yt I say to morowe by commynge the rysynge of the sonne. Yf therefore with necessite I pronounce cõmyng of thinge to come, in this maner loue to morne cõmyng in thyne Margarite to the warde by necessite is cõmynge, or els the rysynge of the sonne to morne cõmynge, through necessyte is commynge. Loue sothely, whiche maye not be of necessyte alone folowynge, thorowe necessite cõminge it is made certayne. For futur of future is said, ỳ is to sayn cõmyng of cõmynge is said: as if to morowe commyng is thorow necessyte cõminge it is. Arysyng of the sonne thorowe two necessites in cõmyng, it is to vnderstãde, ỳ one is to forgoing necessite, which maketh thynge to be, therefore it shal be, for nedeful is that it be. Another is folowing necessite, which nothyng cõstrayneth to be, and so by necessyte it is to come, why: for it is to come. Nowe than, whan we saine, that god before wot thing cõming nedeful is to be cõmyng, yet therfore make we not in certayne, euermore thynge to be thorow necessite commynge. Sothly thyng cõmynge maye nat be nat cõmyng by no way, for it is the same sentence of vnderstanding: as if we say thus. If god before wot any thing, nedefull is that to be cõmynge. But yet therfore folowerh not ỳ prescience of god, thing thorow necessite to be cõmyng: for al tho god tofore wot al thiges cõming, yet nat therfore be before wot euery thyng cõming thorow necessite. Sõe thinges he before wot coming of fre wyll out of resonable creature. Certes (qõ I) these termes, nede & necessite, haue a queynt maner of vnderstãdyng, they wolden dullen many mẽnes wittes. Therfore (qõ she) I wol hem openly declare, & more clerely than I haue tofore er I departe hense.

Here of thys mater (qõ she) thou shalte vnderstãd, that right as it is nat nedeful god to wyine that he wyl, no more in many thynges is nat nedeful a man to wyine that he woll. And euer right as nedeful is to be what that god wol, right so to be it is nedeful that man woll in tho thynges, which that god hath put in to mannes subiection of wyllynge: as if a mã wol loue, that he loue: & if he ne wol loue, that he lone nat, & of suche other thynges in mãnes disposicion. For why, nowe than that god wol may not be, whan he wol the wyl, of man thorowe no necessite to be cõstrayned or els defended for to wilne, & he wol the effecte to folow the wil, than is it nedeful wil of mã to be fre, & also to be that he wol. In this maner it is soth, that thorowe necessite is mãnes werke in louyng, that he wol do altho he wol it nat with necessyte. (Quod I than) howe stante it in loue of thilke will, sythen men hauen wyllyng of free choyce in herr. Wherfore if it be thorow necessite, I praye you ladye of an answerre this question to assoyle. I wol (qõ she) answere the bisuely: right as men wyl not thorow necessite, right so is not loue of wyll thorowe necessite, ne thorowe necessyte wrought thilke same wyl: for if he wold it not with good will, it shulde not haue bene wrought, although that he doth it is nedeful to be doone. But if a man do synne it is nothyng els but to will, that he shuld not: right so synne of wyl is not to be maner necessarye done, no more than wyl is necessarye. Neuerthelater this is sothe, if a man woll synne, it is necessarye him to synne, but though thilke necessyte nothing is constrayned ne defended in the wyl, right so thilke thinge that fre wyll wol and maye, and not maye, not wyine, and nedeful is that to wyine he maye not wyine, but thilke to wyine nedeful is, for impossible to him it is one thinge, and the same to wyine he may not wyine, but thilke to wilne nedeful is: for impossyble to him it is one thinge, and the same to wyine and not to wyine. The werke forsothe of wyll, to whome it is yeue that it be that he hath in wyl, and that he wol not, bolũtarie of spontanye it is, for by spontanye wyl it is do, that is to saye with good wyll, not constrayned: than by wyll not constrayned, it is constrayned to be, and that is it may not togyther be. Yf thys necessyte maketh lybertie of wyll, which that afore they weren they might haue ben eschewed & shonned: God than, whiche ỳ knoweth all truthe, and nothynge but truthe, al these thynges as they arne spontanye or necessarye syght, and as he seeth so they ben: and so with these thinges well consydred it is open at the full, that without all maner repugnaunce, god before wote all maner thinges bene don by fre wyl, which afore they weren might haue ben neuer they shulde be, and yet ben they thorowe a maner necessite from fre wyl discendeth.

Hereby maye (quod she) lyghtly ben knowe that not al thiges to be is of necessite, though

god

god haue hem in his prescience, for somthyn-
ges to be is of lyberrie of wyll: and to make
the to haue ful knowynge of goddes beforne
werynge, here me (quod she) what I shall say.
Blythly lady (quod I) me list this matter en-
tyerly to vnderstande. Thou shalte (qd she)
vnderstande, that in heuens goddes beynge,
although he be ouer all by power, yet there is
adydinge of denyne person, in whiche heuen
is euerlastynge presence, without any mo-
uable tyme there, sole haue I not sayd tofore
this, as time hurteth, right so ayenwarde time
healeth and rewarderh: and a tree oft fayled,
is holde more in deynte whan it frute forthe
bringeth. A marchaunt that for ones lesynge
in the see no more to auenture thynketh, he
shall neuer with auenture come to richesse: so
ofte must men on the oke smyte, tyl the happy
dent haue entred, which with the okes owne
swayre maketh it to come al at ones. So ofte
falleth the lerthy water on the harde roche, tyl
it haue thorowe persed it. The euen draughte
of the wyser drawer, maketh the wyre to ben
euen and supple werchynge, and if he stynted
in his draughte, the wyre breaketh a sonder.
Euery ter wel spryngeth, whan it is wel grou
ded and not eftsones remoued. What shall this
frute be (qd I) nowe it gynneth ryper Grace
(quod she) in partyte ioy to endure, and ther-
with thou begon. Grace (quod I) me thyn-
keth I shoulde haue a rewarde for my longe
trauayle. I shall tel the (quod she) retrybu-
tion of thy good wylles to haue of thy Mar-
garite perle, it beareth not the name of mede,
but onely of good grace, and that cometh not
of thy deserte, but of thy Margarites good-
nesse, and vertue alone. (Quod I) shulde all
my longe trauayle haue no rewarde but tho-
rowe grace, and somtyme your selues sayd,
right wysnesse euermore rewardeth to quyte
one benefyte for another. That is sothe
(quod Loue) euer as I sayde, as to him that
dothe good, whiche to done he were neither
holden ne yet constrayned. That is sothe
(quod I). Trewlye (quod she) all that e-
uer thou dost thyne Margarite perle, of
wyl, of loue, and of reson thou owest to done
it, yet is it nothing els but fryndyng of thy det
in quityng of thy grace, whiche she the lente
whan ye first mette. I wene (quod I) ryght
litle grace to me she delyuered. Certes it was
harde grace, it hath nyghe me astrangled.
That it was good grace I wot wel for wyte
it graunt er thou departe hence. If any man
yeue to another wight to who that he oughte
not, and whyche that of hym selfe nothynge
maye haue, a garnement or a cote, though he
weare the coate or els thyk clothig, it is not
to put to him that was naked for cause of his
clothyng, but only to him that was yeuer of
the garnement. Wherefore I sayr, thou that
were naked of loue, and of thy selfe non haue
mightest, it is not to put to thyne owne per-
sone, sythen thy loue came thorow thy Mar-
garite perle. Ergo she was yeuer of the loue
although thou it vse, and there frate she the
grace thy seruyce to beginne. She is worthy
the thanke of thys grace, for she was the ye-
uer. Al the thoughtes, bely dornges, and ple-
saunce in thy myghte and in thy wordes that
thou canste deuyse, ben but right lytel in qui-
tynge of thy dette: had she not ben, such thing
hadde not bene studyed. So all these maters
lyndely drawen homewarde to this Marga-
ryte perle, for frō thence were they borowed,
al is holly her to wytte the loue that thou ha-
uest: and thus quytest thou thy dette, in that
thou stedfastly seruest. And kepe well that
loue I for rede, that of her thou hast borowed,
and vse it in her seruyce thy det to quite, and
than arte thou able right sone to haue grace,
wherfore after mede in non halue maist thou
loke. Thus thy gynnyng and endynge is but
grace alone, and in thy good deseruynge thy
dette thou aquitest: without grace is nothing
worthe what so euer thou werche. Thanke
thy Margarite of her greate grace that hy-
therto the hath gyded, and praye her of conti-
nuaunce forthe in thy werkes herafter, and
that for no mishappe thy grace ouerthwartly
tourne. Grace, glorie, and ioye, is comynge
thorow good folkes desertes, and by getting
of grace therin shullen ende. And what is
more glorye or more ioye than wysdome and
loue in partyte charite, whiche god hath gras
ted to all tho that well canne deserue. And th
that this lady al at ones sterte in to myn herte
here woll I onbyde (quod she) for euer, and
neuer woll I gon hence, and I woll kepe the
from medlynge whyle me lyste here onbyde:
thyne entrinesynge maners in to stedfastnes
shullen be chaunged.

SOberlyche tho thrwe I by myn eien,
and hugely tho was I astonyed of this
sodayne aduenture, and fayne wolde I haue

emed ho we vertues shulden ben knowen, in
whiche thinges I hope to God here after she
shall me enfourmen, and nameliche sythen her
restynge place is nowe so nyghe at my wyll:
and as on al these thinges that this lady said,
I remembred me by my selfe, and revolued
the lynes of myne vnderstondyng wyttes.
Tho found I fully al these matters parfytely there writen, howe myselfe rule by fayned
loue both realmes and cityes hath governed
a great throwe. Howe lyghtly me myght the
fautes espye, howe rules in loue shulde bene
vsed, howe sometyme wyth fayned loue foule
I was begyled, howe I shulde loue haue
knowe, and how I shall in loue with my ser-
uyce procede. Also furthermoze I founde of
perdurable leters wöderly there graue, these
matters whiche I shal nempne. Certes none
age ne other thinge in erthe may the leest syl-
lable of this in no poynte deface, but clerelye
as the sonne in myne vnderstandynge soule
they shynen. This maye neuer oute of my
mynde, howe I maye nat my loue kepe, but
throwe wyllynge in herte: Wyne to loue
maye I not, but I louynge haue. Loue haue
I none but throwe grace of thys Margarite perle. It is no maner doute, that wil wol
not loue but foz it is louyng, as wyl woll not
rightfully, but foz it is rightful it selue. Also
wyll is not louynge foz he woll loue, but he
woll loue foz he is louynge: it is al one to wil
to be louynge, and louynges in possessyon to
haue. Right so wyl woll not loue, foz of loue
hath he no partie, & yet I denye not louynge
wyll wyne moze loue to haue, which that he
hath not whan he wolde moze than he hath,
but I saye he maye no loue wyne, yf he no
loue haue, through which thilke loue he shuld
wyne: but to haue thys louyng wyll may no
man of him selfe, but onely through grace to-
forne goyng: Right so maye no man it kepe,
but by grace folowynge. Consyder nowe e-
uery man aryght, and lerne sen if ỳ any wyghte
of him selfe mow this louing wel get, and be
therof first nothinge haue: foz yf it shoulde of
him selfe spring, eyther it must be wyllyng oz
not wyllyng. Wyllyng by him selfe may he it
not haue, sythen him fayleth the matter that
shulde it forth bringe, the mater him fayleth:
Why, he may therof haue no knowynge, syth
whan grace put it in his hert. Thus wyllyng
by him selfe may he it not haue, and not wyl-
lyng may he it not haue. Parde euery conseyt
of euery reasonable creature otherwyse will
not graunt: wyl in affyrmatife with not wyl
lyng by no way mowe accorde. And although
this louing wol come in mine hert by frenesse
of arbytrement, as in this boke fullye is she-
wed, yet owe I not therfoze as moche alowe
my frewill, as grace of that Margarite tome
leaned, foz neither might I without grace to
forn goyng, and afterwardes folowyng, thilke
grace get ne kepe, and lese shal I it neuer but
if frewyll it make, as in wyllynge otherwyse
than grace hath me graunted. Foz ryght as
whan any person taketh voylling to be sobre,
and throweth ỳ away, wyllynge to be dzóke,
oz vis taketh will of drinking oute of mesure:
whiche thing anon as it is done, maketh thor-
owe his owen gylte by forwil that lefeth his
grace. In which thinge therfoze vpon the no-
blesse of grace I mote trusten, & my besye cure
set thilke grace to kepe, that my frewil other-
wyse than by reason it shulde wercke, caught
not my grace to voyde: foz thus must I bothe
loke to frewyl and to grace. Foz right as na-
turell vsage in engendzynge of chyldren may
not ben without father, ne also but with the
mother, foz neyther father ne mother in be-
gettyng maye it lacke: right so grace and fre-
wyll accorden, and without hem bothe may
not louyng wyl in no partie bene geten. But
yet is not frewyll in get[illegible] of that thinge so
moche thake worthy as is grace, ne in the kep-
pynge therof, so muche thanke deserueth, and
yet in gettynge and keppynge bothe done they
accorde. Trewly often tyme graee frewyl hel-
peth in forsoynge of contrarye thinges, that
to wyllynge loue not accorden, and strengthe
wyll aduersytees to wyth stande, wherfoze al to-
gyther to grace owerth to bene accepted, ỳ my
wyllyng deserueth: frewyl to louyng in this
wyse is accorded. I remembre me wel howe
all this booke (who so hede taketh) confyde-
reth al thinges to werchinges of mankynde
euenly accorderh, as in turnyng of this word
loue in to trouthe, oz vis ryghtwisenesse, whe
ther that it lyke. Foz what thing that falleth
to man in helpyng of free arbitrement, thilke
rightwysnesse to take oz vis to kepe, throwe
whiche a man shalbe saued, of whiche thyng
all this booke mencion hath maked, in euery
poynte therof grace oweth to be thanked.
Wherfoze I saye, euery wight hauynge thys
rightwysnes ryghtful is, and yet therfoze I
fele not in my cõscience, that to al rightful is

be-

behoten the blysse euerlastynge, but to hem that ben rightful withouten any vnrightfulnesse. Some manne after some degree maye rightfully ben accompted: as chaste menne in lyuynge, and yet ben they fangilers and ful of enuye pressed: to hem shal thys blysse neuer ben deliuered. For right as very blisse is without al maner nede, right so no man shal it be geuen but to the ryghtful, voyde from al maner vnrightfulnesse founde, so no man to her blysse shal ben folowed, but he be ryghtfull, and with vnrightfulnesse not bounde, and in that degree fully be knowe. This rightfulnesse in as muche as in hym selfe is, of none yuel it is cause, and of all maner goodnesse trewly it is mother. This helpeth the spirit to withstitte the leude lustes of flesshly lykynge: This strengtheth and mayntayneth the law of kynde, and if that otherwhyle me werneth harme of this pricious thing to folowe, therthroughe is nothynge the cause, of somwhat els cometh it aboute who so taketh hede. By ryghtfulnesse forsoth werne many holy sayntes good sauour i swetnesse to god almighty but that to some folkes they were sauour of dethe in to verdly ende, that come nat of the sayntes rightwysnesse, but of other wycked mennes badnesse hath proceded. Trewly the like yl, whiche that the lady of loue me lerned, affection of [illegible], whiche is in wylyng of profytable thinges, yuel is it not, but whan to flesshly lustes it cõsenteth, ayenst reason of soule: But that thys thynge more clerely be vnderstãd, it is for to know, whẽce and howe thilke wyl is so vicious and so redye, yuel dedes to perfourme. Grace at the gynnynge ordayned thylke wyl in goodnesse euer to haue endured, and neuer to badnesse haue assented: Whenne shulde not byleue, that God thylke wyl maked to be vycious. Oure firste father as Adam and Eue, for vycyous appetytes and vicyous wyl to suche appetytes consentynge, ben not on thynge in kynde, other thynge is done for the other. And howe this will first in to man fyrst assented, I holde it profytable to shewe: but if the first condycion of reasonable creature wol be considred and apertly loked, lyghtly the cause of suche wyl may ben shewed. Intencion of god was that rightfully and blessed shulde reasonable nature ben maked, hym selfe for to kepe, but neither blysful ne ryghtfull myght it not be, withouten wyl in them bothe. Wyl of ryghtfulnesse is thylke same rightfulnesse, as here tofore is shewed: but wyll of blysse is not thilke blisse, for euery manne hath not thylke blysse, in whom the wyl therof is abydynge. In this blysse after euery vnderstandinge is suffysaunce of conenable comodytees without any maner nede, whether it be blysse of aungels or els thylke, that grace first in paradise suffred Adam to haue. For al though angels blysse be more than Adams was in paradyse, yet maye it not be denyed, that Adam in paradyse ne had suffysaunce of blysse: For right as great herte is without al maner of coldenesse, and yet maye another herte more heate haue, right so nothyng defended Adam in paradyse to ben blissed, without al maner nede. Al thoughe aungels blysse be muche more, forsothe it foloweth nat lasse thanne another to haue therefore hym nedeth, but for to wante a thynge whiche that behoueth to ben had, that maye nede ben cleped, and that was nat in Adam at the first gynnynge. God and the Margaryte wetrn what I meane. Forsothe where as is nede, there is wretchidnesse, good without cause to forngoing made not reasonable creature wretched, for hym to vnderstande and loue hadde he firste maked. God made therfore man blysfed without al maner indigence, togyther and at ones toke reasonable creature blysse, and wyll of blysfednesse, and wyl of ryghtfulnesse, whiche is rightfulnesse it selue, and lybertie of arbytrement, that is fre wil, with whiche thilke rightfulnesse may he kepe and lese. So and in that wyse ordayned thylke two, that wyl whiche that instrumente is cleaped, as here tofore mencion is maked, shulde vse thilke rightfulnesse, by teachyng of his soule to good maner of gouernaunce, in thought and in wordes, and that it shoulde vse the blysse in obedyent maner, withouten anye incõmodyte. Blysse forsothe in to mannes profyte, and right wysnesse into his worshyp god deliuered at ones: but rightfulnesse so was geuen ỳ man might it lese, which yf he not lost had not, but contynuelly haue it kept, he shulde haue deserued the auauncement in to the felowshyppe of angels, in which thyng if he that lost, neuer by hym selfe forwarde shulde he it mowe ayenwarde recouer: and as wel the blysse that he was in, as aungels blisse that to him wardes was coming, shulde be nome at ones, and he depriued of them bothe. And thus fyl man vn

to lyuenesse of vnreasonable beestes, and with hem to corrupcion & bolustes apetytes was he bodes throwen, but yet wyl of hym dwelleth, that by endygence of good whiche that he lost thoughe great wyrchednesse, by right shulde he ben punished. And thus for he weyued rightfulnesse, lost hath he his liyfle: but sayle of hys desire in his own comodite may he not, and were comodites to his reasonable nature whiche he hath lost may he not haue. To false lustes, whiche ben bestial apetites he is turned: soiye of vnconnyng hath him begyled, in wenyng þ thilke ben the comodytes that owen to ben desyred. Thys affection of wyl by lyberte of arbitrement is endured to wyne thus thing that he shulde not, and so is wil not maked yuel but vnrightful, by ableccē of rightfulnesse, whiche thing by reason euer shulde he haue. And frenesse of arbytrement may he not wyne, whan he it not haueth, for whyle he it had, thilke helpe it not to kepe: so that without grace may it not ben recouered. wyl of cōmodyte, in as muche as vnrightful it is maked, by wyllynge of yuel lustes, wyllyng of goodnesse may he not wyne: for wyl of instrument to affection of wyl is thralled, sythen that other thyng may not it wynne, for wyl of instrument to affection desyreth, & yet ben both they wyl cleped: for that instrument wol, through affection it wylneth, & affection desyreth thilke thing whereto instrument him ledeth. And so frewel to vnlusty affection ful seruaunt is maked, for vnryghtfulnesse maye he not reieue, & without rightfulnesse ful fredome may it neuer haue. For kyndely lyberty of arbytrement wit hout it, beyne and yuel is forsoth. Wherfore yet I say, as often haue I sayd the same, whan instrument of wyl lost hath rightfulnesse, in no maner but by grace may he ayen retourne rightfulnesse to wyne. For sythen nothynge but rightfulnesse alone shulde he wine, what þ euer he wilneth without rightfulnesse, vnrightfully he it wylneth. These than vnrightful appetites & vnthrifty lustes which þ flyes desyreth, in as moche as they ben in kynde, ben they not bad, but they ben vnrightfull and badde, for they ben in reasonable creature, where as they beynge in no waye shulde ben suffred. In vnreasonable beestes neither ben they yuel ne vnrightful, for there is their kynde beyng.

Knowen maye it wel ben nowe, of thelle thinges tofore declared, þ mā hath not alway thilk rightfulnes, which by dure of right euermore hauen he shulde, and by no way by him self may he it get ne kepe, & after he it hath if he it lese, recouer shal he it neuer, without especial grace: wherfore the comune sentence of the people in opynion, that euery thynge after destenye is ruled, false and wicked is to bylyue: for thoughe predestynacion be as wel of good as of badde, sythen that it is sayde god badnesse made, whiche he neuer ne wrought, but for he suffereth hem to be maked, as that he hateth whan he nought misfayth, or ledde in to temptacion whan he not deffendereth, wherfore it is none inconuenient it in that maner be said, god tofore haue destenyed bothe badde, and yet badde werkes, whan hem ne their yuel dedes neyther amendeth, ne therto hem grace leueth. But specyalliyche predestynacion of goodnesse alone, is sayde by these great clerkes, for in hym god doth that they ben, and that in goodnes they werchen. But the negatyfe berof in badnesse is holden, as the lady of loue hath me lerned, who so stryght in thys booke loketh. And verily it is to weten, that predestynacion properly l god may not ben demed, no more than before wering. For in the chapitre of gods before wetyng, as [illegible] rehersed, al these maters apertely maye ben founden. Methynges to god ben nowe togyther & in prefeuer durynge. Trewly prefence and predestynacion in nothynge discorden, wherfore as I was lerned howe goddes befere wetyng and fre choyce of wyll mowe stonden togyther, me thinketh the same reason me leadeth, that destenye and frewyl acorden, so that neyther of hem bothe to other in nothing contrarieth. And reasonablyche may it not ben demed, as often as any thing falleth frewyl werchyng, as if a man another man wrongefully anoyeth. wherfore he hym sleeth, that it be cōstrayned to that ende, as moral folke ceyeth and sayth: Lo, as it was destenyed of god tofore know, so it is thorowe nedessitē fal, and other wyse might it not betide. Trewly neyther he that the wong wrought, ne he that hym self benged, none of thylke thynges thorowe necessyte wrought: for yf that with frewyl there had it not wylled, neyther had wrought that he performed: and so vtterly grace that frewyl in goodnesse bryngeth and kepeth, and

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fro badnesse it tourneth, in all thynge moste thanke deserueth. Thys grace maketh sentence in vertue to abyde, wherfore in body and in soule in ful plentie of comynge after their good deseruyng in the euerlastyng ioye, after the day of dome shul they endelesse dwel, and they shul ben lerned in that kyngdome with so mokel affecte of loue and of grace, that the lest ioye shal of the greatest in glorye reioyce and ben gladded, as yf he the same ioye had. What wonder sith god is ỳ greatest loue, and the ne ought to loke thynges with resonning to proue, a so is instrumente of wyl, wyl: and yet varyeth he from effecte a dsing bothe. Affection of wyl also for wyl is cleped, but it varyeth from instrument in this maner wise, by that name, lyche whan it cometh in to mynde anon right it is in wyllynge desyred, and the negatyfe therof with wylling my not acorde: this is closed in herte, thoughe vsage and instrument slepe. This slepeth whan instrumẽt and vs waken: and of suche maner affectyon trewely some man hath more and some man lesse. Certes trewe louers wenen euer therof to lytel to haue. False louers in lytel wenen haue ryght mokell: Lo instrument of wyl in false and trewe bothe euen lych is proporcioned, but affection is more in some place than in some, because of goodnesse that folowyth and that I thynke necessarie to declare. Use of this instrumẽt is wyl, but it taketh his name whan wilned thing is in doyng. But vtterly grace to catch in thy blysse, desyred to ben rewarded. Thou muste haue than affection of wyl at the ful, and vse whan his tyme asketh wysely to ben gouerned. Sothly my disciple without feruent affection of wyl may no man ben saued: thys affection of good seruyce in good loue, maye not bee grounded, without feruent desyre to the thynge in wyl coueyted. But he that neuer retcheth to haue or not to haue affection of wyl in that hath no restyng place. Wherfor whan thing cometh to minde and it be not taken in hede to comyn or not come, therfore in that place affection fayleth: a for thylke affection is so lytel, thorow whiche in goodnesse he shulde come to hys grace, the lytelnesse wyl it not suffre to auayle by no way in to hys helpes: Certes grace and reson thilke affection folowyth. This affection with reason knytte, dureth in euerychc trew herte, and euermore is encreasynge, no ferdnes, no strength may it remoue while truthe in herte abideth. Sothly whan falsheed gynneth entre, truth draweth away, grace, and ioy both: but than thilk falsheed that trouth hath thus boyded, hath vnknit the bonde of vnderstandyng reason, betwene wyl and the herte. And who so that bonde vndothe, and vnknittreth wyl to be in other purpose than to the first acorde, knytteth hym with contrary of reason, and that is vnreason. Lo, than wyl and vnreson bringeth a man from the blisse of grace, which thing of pure kynde, euery man ought to shonne a to eschewe, and to the knot of wil and reason confyrme. Me thynketh (qõ she) by thy studiet lokes, thou wenest in these wordes me to contrarie, from other sayinges here tofore in other place, as whan thou were sõtyme in affection of wil, to thinges that now han brought the in disease, which I haue the counsayled to voyde, and thyn herte discouer, and there I made thy wyl to ben chaunged, which now thou wenest I argue to withold and to kepe. Shortly I say ỳ reuers in these wordes may not ben foũde: for though dronkenesse be forboden, men shul not alway ben drinklesse. I trowe right for thou thy wil out of reason shulde not tourne, thy wyll in one reason shulde not vnbyde, I saye thy wyl in thy first purpose with vnreason was closed: Constrewe forth of the remnaunte what the good lyketh. Trewly that wyl a reson shulde be knyt togyder was fre wyl of reason, after tyme thyne herte is assentaunt to them both, thou might not chaũge, but if thou from rule of reason varye, in whiche variaunce to come to thilke blisse desired, cõtrariously thou werchest: and nothynge may knowe wyl a reason but loue alone. Than yf thou voyde loue, thã weuest the bonde that knytteth, and so nedes or els right lightly, that other gon a sondrie, wherfore thou sest apertly that loue holdeth this knot, and amaystreth hem to be bounde. These thynges, as a ringe in circuit of wreth ben knyt in thy soule without departynge. I let be, let be (qõ I) it nedeth not of this no rehersayle to make, my soule is yet in partye blysse, in thynkyng of that knotte.

NOwe trewlylady I haue my grounde wel vnderstond, but what thig is thilke spire that in to a tree shoulde were: Expowne me that thyng, what ye therof meane. That shal I (qõ she) blythlye, and take good hede to the wordes I the rede. Continuaunce

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in thy good seruyce, by longe processe of tyme in ful hope abyding, without any chaunge to wryne in thyn herte: this is the spire, whiche if it be wel kept and gouerned, shal so hugely springe, tyl the fruite of grace is plentuously out sprongen: For al thoughe thy wyl be good, yet may not therfore thilk blisse desired hastely on the discreden, it must abide his resonable tyme. And so by processe of growing, vb thy good trauayle, it shall in to more & more wexe, tyl it be founde so mighty, that windes of yuel speche, ne stormes of enuye, make nat the trauayle ouerthrowe, ne frostes of mystrust, ne hayles of ielousye right lytel myght haue in harmynge of suche springes. Euery yonge setling lightly with smal stormes is a peyred, but whan it is woxē somdele i greatnesse, than han great blastes & werthers but lyte myght, any disauauntage to hem for to wer che. Myne owne souerayne lady (qō I) and welth of myne hert, and it were lykyng vntō your noble grace, therthrough nat to be displeased, I suppose ye erren, nowe ye maken ielousye enuy, & disfourbour to hem that ben your seruauntes. I haue lerned ofte tofore this time, that in euery louers hert, great plēte of ielousies greues ben sow, wherfore me thynketh ye ne ought in no maner accompte, thilke thynge amonge these other welked wiuers and venomous serpētes, as enuye, mystrust, & yuel speche. O foole (qō she) mystrust with folý with yuel wyl medled, engēdreth ý welked padde. Truely if they were distroyed ielousy vndone were for euer, & yet some maner of ielousy I wot wel is euer redy in al the hertes of my trewe seruaūtes, as thus: to be ielous ouer hi selfe, lest he be cause of his own disease. This ielousy in ful thouze euer shulde be kept for ferdnesse to lese his loue by mysbeyng, thorowe his owne doyng in leudnesse, or els thus: Lest she that thou seruest so fernently is beset there her better lyketh, that of al thy good seruyce the compteth nat a cresse. These ielousies in herte for acceptable qualytees ben demed: these oughten euery trew louer by kyndely, euermore haue in his mynde, tyl fully the grace & blysse of my seruice be on him discreden at wil. And he ý than ielousy catcheth, or els by wenynge of his owne folysche wylfulnesse mystrusteth, truely with fantasy of benyme, he is foule begyled. Yuel wyl hath grounded thilke mater of sorowe in his leude foule, & yet nat for than to euery wight shulde me not trust, ne euery wight fully miscreue, the meane of these thynges owen to be vsed. Sothly without en causeful euidēce, mistrust in ielousy shulde not be wened in no wise person comenly, suche leude wickednesse shulde me nat fynde. He that is wise & with yuel wil nat be acomered, can abyde wel his tyme, tyl grace & blisse of his seruice folowing haue hi so mokel eased, as his abidinge tofore hande hath hi diseased. Certes lady (qō I tho) of no thyng me wōdreth, sithen thilke blisse so precious is & kyndely good, & wel is & worthy in kynde, whan it is medled with loue & reason, as ye tofore haue declared. Why, anon as hir one is sprōg, why springeth not the tother & anone as the one cometh, why receyueth not the other? For euery thyng that is out of hys kindely place, by ful appetite, euer cometh tō derwarde kindely to drawe, & his kindely beyng therto him cōstrayneth. And ý kidly stede of this blysse, is in suche wyl medled to vnbyde, & nedes in that it shulde haue his kyndely beyng. Wherfore me thinketh anon as that wyl to be shewed & kyd him profereth, thilke blysse shuld hi bye thilk wil to receyue, or els kinde of goodnesse worchen not in hē as they shulde. Lo, be the sonne neuer so ferre, euer it hath his kinde werching in erthe: great weight on hye onloft caried, stinteth neuer til it come to this resting place. to the see warde euer ben they drawyng, thig ý is light blythly wil not synke, but euer ascēdeth & vpward draweth. Thus kinde in euery thig his kindely course, & his beynge place sheweth: Wherfore be kide on this good wil, anon as it wer sprōnge, this blysse shulde the con discrēde, her kynde wold they dwelleden togyder, & so haue ye sayd your selfe. Certes (quod she) thyne hert sitteth wōder sore this blisse for to haue, thyn hert is sore agreued ý it tarieth so lōge, and if thou durst, as me thinketh by thyne wordes, this blisse wolde st thou blame. But yet I say, thylke blysse is kyndely good, and his kyndely place in ý wyl to vnbyde. Neuer the later, their cōmyng togider after kindes ordinaunce nat sodaynly maye betyde, it must abide tyme, as kynde yeueth him leaue, for if a man, as thys wyl medled gonne hym shewe, and thylke blysse in haste folowed, so lightly cōming shulde lyghely cause goyng, longe tyme of thrustyng, causeth drinke to be the more delycious whan it is atasted. Howe is it (quod I than) that so many blysses se I al daye

al daye at myne eye, in the fyrst moment of a syght with suche wyll accorde. Ye, and yet other whyle with wyl assenteth, synguleriy by hym selfe there reason fayleth, traueyle was none, seruyce had no ryme. Thys is a queynt maner thynge, howe suche doynge cometh about. O (quod she) that is thus, the erthe kyndely after seasons and tymes of the yere, bringeth forth innumerable herbes and trees bothe profytable and other, but suche as men might leaue, though they were nought in nothynge to mannes kynde seruen, or els suche as tournen soone vnto mẽnes confusyon in case that therof they atast, comen forthe out of the erthe by their own kynde, withouten any mannes cure or any busynesse in traueyle: and the like herbes that to mẽnes liuelode necessarily seruen, whithout which goodly in this syke creatures mowen not enduren, and moste ben nourishen to mankynde, without great traueyle, great tylthe, and longe abyding tyme, comen not out of the erthe, and if with seed tofore ordayned such herbes to make sprynge and forthe growe. Right so the parfyte blysse, that we haue in meanynge of duryng tyme to abide may nat come so lyghtly, but with great traueyle & right besy tilth, and yet good seed to be sowe, for oft ꝑ croppe fayleth of badde seede if it neuer so wel traueyled. And thilke blisse thou spoke of so lyghtly in cõminge, trewly is nat necessary ne abidynge: and but it the better be stamped, & the venomous ieuse out wrongen, it is lykely to empoysonen all tho that therof tasten. Certes right bitter bẽ ꝑ herbes that shewen first the yere of her own kynde. Wel the more is ꝑ harme that yeldeth many graynes, tho longe and sore it hath ben traueyled. What woldest thou demẽ yf a man wold yeue thre quarters of nobles of golde, that were a precious gifte ye certes (qõ I). And what (qõ she) thre quarters ful of peeries. Certes (qõ I) that wer a ryche gyfte. And what (qõ she) of as mokel azure. (Qõ I) a precyous gyfte at ful. Were not (qõ she) a noble gifte of al these at ones. In good fayth (qõ I) for wãting of englysshe namynge of so noble a word, I cã not for precyousnesse yeue it a name: Ryghtfully (qõ she) haste thou demed, and yet loue knytte in vertue, passeth all the golde in thys erthe. Good wyl accordant to reason, with no maner properte may be counteruayled, al the azure i the world is not to accoũte in respecte of reason, loue that with good wyl & reason accordeth, with non erthly ryches may nat ben amẽded. This yeft hast thou yeuen I know it my selfe & thy Margarit thilke gyft hath receyued, in whiche thynge to rewarde she hath her selfe bounde. But thy gyft as I sayd, by no maner riches may be amẽded, wherfore with thing that may nat be amẽded, ꝑ shalte of thy margarites rizt wiseneſſe be rewarded. Right sukred yet neuer but euery good dede cõtyme to be yolde. Al wolde thy Margarit with no rewarde the quite. Right ꝑ neuer more dyeth thy mede in merit wol puruey. Certes such sodayne blisse as thou first nẽpnest, rizt wyl hẽ reward as ꝑ wel is worthy, & though at thin eye it semeth ꝑ rewarde ꝑ desert to passe, rizt can after sende suche bitternesse euẽly it to rewarde: so ꝑ sodayne blysse by alwayes of reson in great goodnesse may not be acompted, but blisse long, both long it abideth, & endelesse it wol last. See why thy wyl is endelesse, for if thou louedest euer, thy wil is euer ther tabide & neuer more to chaũge: euenhed of rewarde must ben done by right: than muste nedes thy grace & this blysse endelesse in ioy to vnbyde. Euenlyche disese asketh euenliche ioy, which hastely thou shalte haue. I (qõ I) it suffyseth not than alone good wil, be it neuer so wel wt reson medled, but if it be in good seruyce long trauayled. And so thzonghe seruyce shul men come to the ioye, & this me thynketh shuld be the wexyng tree of whiche ye first meued.

VEry trouthe (quod she) haste thou nowe conceyued of these thynges in thyn hert hastely shalt thou be able very ioye & parfyte blysse to receyue. And now I wote wel ꝑ desyrest to know the maner of braunches, that out of the tre shulde sprynge. Therof lady (qõ I) herteily I you pray: for than leue I wol, that right soone after I shal atast of the frute that I so longe haue desired. Thou hast herde (qõ she) in what wyse this tre tofore this haue I declared, as in groũd & in stocke of wexyng. First the groũde shulde be thy frewil ful in thyne hert, & the stocke (as I sayde) shulde be cõtinuaunce in good seruice, by long tyme in trauayle, til it were in greatnesse right wel woxen. And whã this tre such greatnes hath caught, as I haue rehersed: the braũches thẽ that the frute shulde forth bring, speche must they be nedes in voyce of prayer, i cõplayning wyse vsed. Out alas (qõ I tho) he is sorowfully

fully wouded that hideth his sper & spareth his coplayners to make, what shal I speke þ care: but payne euen sythe to hel, sore hath me assayled, & so ferforthe in payne me thronge, that I leue my tre is seer, & neuer shal it frute forth bring. Certes he is greatly eased, þ dare his pleuy mone discouer to a true frlow, that cōning hath & might, wherthrough his pleint in any thig may be amēded. And mokel more is he ioyed that with herte of hardynesse dare cōplayne to his lady, what cares that he suffreth, by hope of mercy & grace to be auaunced. Truely I say for me, sythe I came thys margarit to serue, durst I neuer me discouer of no maner disease, & wel the later hath myn herte hardyed suche thynges to done, for the great bountes and worthy refreshmentes þ she of her grace goodly wout anye desert on my halue ofte hath me rehersed, and nere her goodnesse the more with grace & with mercy medled, whiche passen all deserues, trauayls, and seruynges, that I in any degre might endite, I wolde were I shuld be without recouer, in gettyng of thys blysse for euer. Thus haue I stylled my disease, thus haue I couered my care, that I dren in sorouful anoy, as giedes & coles wasten a fyre vnd bred asken. Wel the hoter is the fire, that with asken it is ouerleyn: right long thys wo haue I suffred. Lo (qō Loue) howe thou farest: me thynketh the palsye yuel hath acombred thy wittes, as fast as thou hielt forwarde, anon sodaynly backwarde thou mouest. Shal nat yet al thy frudnesse eut of thy brayne? dul ben thy shalful vnderstādiges, thy wil hath thy wit so amaistred. Wost thou not wel (qō she) but euery tree in his seasonable tyme of burionynge shewe his blomes fro within, i sigue of what fruite shulde out of him spring, eis þ frute for that yere men hait deliuered, be the grounde neuer so good. And though þ stock be mighty at the ful, & the braunches seer & no burions shewe, farwel the gardiner he may pipe with an yue leke his fruite is fayled. Wherfore thy braūches muste burioné i presēce of thy lady, if thou desire anye frute of thy ladyes grace, but beware of thy life, that thou no wo delay bite, as in asayng of thynges that stretchen in to shame, for thā might thou not spede by no way that I can espye. Vertue wol not suffre villany out of him selfe to springe. Thy wordes may not be queynt ne of subtel maner vnderstādinge. Freelwitted people supposen in suche poesies to be beggled, in open vnderstāding must euery worde be vsed. Voyce without eiere vnderstāding of sentēce saith Aristotel, right nought profiteth i hert. Thy wordes the to abide in hert, & clene in ful sentēce of trewe mening plainly must thou shewe & euer be obedient, her hestes & her wyls to perfourme, & be thou set in suche a wit to wete by a loke euer more what she meaneth. And he that lyst nat to speke, but stilly his disease suffre: what wōder is it tho he neuer come to his blisse? who that trauayleth vnwist, & coueyteth thing vnknowe, vnwetynge he shal be quyted, & with vnknowe thinge rewarded. Good lady (qō I thā) it hath ofte be sene, that werthers & stormes so hugely haue fal in burionynge tyme, & by perte bureste han beaten of the springes so clene, wherthrough þ frute of thilk yere hath fayled. Je is a great grace whan burions han good werthers, their frutes forth to bringe. Alas, than after suche stormes how harde is it to auoyde, tyl efte wedring & peers han maked her circute cours al about, er any frute be able to be tasted he is shent for shame, þ foule is rebuked of his speche. He that is in fire brenning sore smarteth for disease. Him thinketh ful long er the water come, that shulde þ fire quenche. Awhile men gon after a leche, the body is burped. [illegible] this frute werreth, me thynketh [illegible] frutes maye no man atasle, for pure bytternesse in sauoure. In this wyse bothe frute and the tre wasten away together, though mokel besy occupacō haue be spente to bringe is so ferforth, that it was able to spring. A litel speche hath maked that al thiz labourt is in ydel. I not (qō she) wherof it seruethe by question to assoyle, me thynketh the now duller i wittes, than whan I with the first mette, although a mā be lewde, cōmenly for a foole he is not demed, but if he no good wol lerne, sottes and fooles let lyghtly out of mynde, the good that men teacheth hem. I sayd therfore thy stocke must be stronge, & in greatnesse wel herted, the tree is ful feble that at the first dent fayleth: and although frute faileth one yere or two, yet shal suche a season come one tyme or other, that shal bring out frute that is nothyng perceiued passed there is nothing future ne comyng, but al thynges together in that place ben present ruelia flying without any meuyng, wherfore to god al thynge is as nowe: & though a thyng be nat in kyndly nature of thynges as

yet

yet, and if it shulde be herafter, yet euermore we shall saye god it maketh be time present, & nowe for no future ne preterit in him maye be founde. Wherfore his weting & his before weeyng, is al one in vnderstādinge. Than yf weeyng & before weeyng of god putteth in necessite to al thinges which he wot or before wot ne thyng after eternyte, or els after any tyme he wol or dothe of lyberte but al of necessyte, whiche thyng if thou wene it be ayenst reason nat thorowe necessite to be or nat to be, al thinge that god wot or before wot, to be or nat to be, & yet nothynge defendeth any thyng to be wyst or to be before wist of hi in our willes or our doynges to be done, or els cōmynge to be for fre arbitrement. Whan thou hast these declarations wel vnderstād, than shalt thou fynde it resonable at prouc, & that many thinges be nat thorowe necessite, but thorowe lyberte of wyl, saue necessyte of free wil, as I tofore said: & as me thinketh al veteriy declared. Me thynketh lady (qō I) so I shulde you nat displease, & evermore your reuerēce to kepe, that these thinges cōtrarien in anye vnderstādyng, for ye sayne somtyme is thorowe liberte of wyl & also thorowe necessite. Of this haue I yet no sauour, without better declaration what wonder (qō she) is there in these thinges, sithen all day thou seest at thyne eye, in many thinges percepden al hem selfe reuers, thorow diuers reasons, as thus. I pray the (qō she) which thinges ben more reuers thā comen & gone: for if I bidde the come to me, and thou come, after whan I bydde the go & thou go, thou reuersest fro thy first cōmynge. That is soth (qō I) & yet (qō she) in thy fyrste alone by dyuers reasone was ful reuersynge to vnderstāde. As howe (qō I) That shall I shewe the (qō she) by ensāple of thynges that haue kyndly mouyng. Is there any thynge ỹ meueth more kyndly than doth the heuēs eye whiche I clepe the sonne. Sothlye (qō I) me semeth it most kyndly to moue. Thou sayest soth (qō she). Than if thou loke to the sonne, in what parte he be vnder heuen, euermore he beigheth him in mouyng fro thilke place, and beigheth meuyng towarde ỹ like same place, to thylke place from which he gothe he brigherh cōmynge, and without anye ceasynge to that place he neigheth from which he is chaūged & withdrawe. But nowe in these thinges after dyuersite of reason, reuers in one thing may be sey without repugnaunce. Wherfore in the same wyse, without any repugnaunce by my reasons to fore maked, al is one to beleue, somthing to be thorow necessite cōming for it is commynge, & yet with no necessite constrayned to be cōming, but with necessite that cometh out of free wyl, as I haue sayde. Tho lyst me a lyte to speke, & gan stynte my penne of my writyng, & said in this wyse. Trewlye lady as me thinketh, I can allege authoritees gret that cōtrarien your sayenges. Job saith of mannes person, thou hast putte his terme, whiche thou might nat passe. Than saye I that no man may shorte ne length the day ordayned of his doyng, altho somtyme to vs it semeth some man to do a thynge of free wyl, wherthorowe his dethe he heuereth Naye for sothe (qō she) it is nothing ayenst my sayeng for god is nat begiled, ne he seeth nothig whether it shal come of lyberte or els of necessyte, yet it is said to be ordayned at god immouable, whiche at man or it be done may be chaūged. Suche thing also is that Poule the apostel sayth of hem that tofore were purposed to be sayntes, as thus, which that god before wyst, & hathe predestyned, cōformes of ymages of his sonne, that he shulde ben the fyrste begeten, that is to saye, here a monges many bretheru, & whōe he hath predestyned, hem he hath cleped, and whom he hath cleped, hem he hath iustified, & whom he hath iustifyed hem he hath magnified. This purpose after whiche they ben cleped saintes or holy in the euerlasting present, wherin neither tyme passed ne tyme cōmynge, but euer it is onely present, & nowe as mokel a momēt as seuen thousande wynter, & so ayenwarde without any meuyng is nothing yche tēporel presence, for thige that there is euer present. Yet amōges you men er it be in your presēce it is mouable thorowe lyberte of arbitrement. And right as in the euerlastyng present no maner thyng was ne shalbe, but onely is, & nowe here in your tēporel tyme, somthyng was & is, & shalbe, but mouynge stoundes, & in this is no maner repugnaunce. Right so in the euerlastynge presence nothyng may be chaūged: & in your tēporel tyme other while it is proued mouable by lyberte of wil or it be do, wouten any inconuenience therof to folowe. In your temporel tyme is no suche presence as in ỹ thother, for youre present is done, whan passed & to come gynnen entre, which times here amōges you euereych easely foloweth other, but the presēce

euerlastyng dureth in onehed, without any ymaginable chaūgyng, & euer is present and nowe. Trewly þ course of the planettes & ouerwhelmynges of the sonne in dayes & nightes, with a newe ginnyng of his circuse after it is ended, that is to sayn, one yere to folowe another. These maken your trāsitory tymes with chaūgynge of lyues & mutation of people. But right as your tēporel presence couereth euery place, & al thinges in euery of your tymes be cōtayned, & as now both sey & wyll to goddes very knowynge. Than (qō I) me wondreth why Boule spake these wordes, by doyce of signification in tyme passed, þ god his sawntes before wist, hath predestined, hath cleped, hath iustifyed, & hath magnified: Me thynketh he shulde haue sayde tho wordes in tyme present, & that had ben more accordaunt to the euerlastyng present, than to haue spoke in preterit voice of passed vnderstandynge.

O (qō Lone) by these wordes I se wel thou haste lytel vnderstāding of þ euerlasting presence, or els of my before spoken wordes, for neuer a thing of tho thou hast nēpned was to fore other or after other, but al atones euēlich at the god ben, & al togider in the euerlasting present be nowe to vnderstādyng, the eternal presence, as I said, hath inclose togider I one, al tymes, in which close & one al thinges that ben in dyuers tymes & in dyuers places tempozel wout posteriozite or priozite ben closed therin perpetual now, and maked to dwel in pfect sight. But there thou saiest that Boule shulde haue spoke thilke forsaid sentence be time present, & that most shulde haue ben accordaunt to the euerlastinge presence, why gabbest þ to thy wordes. Sothly I saye Boule moued þ wordes by signification of tyme passed, to shewe fully þ thilke wordes were nat put for tēporel signification, for al thilk tyme were nat thilk sentēce tēporalych bozne, while that Boule pronounced god haue tofore knowe, & haue cleped than magnified, wherthorow it may wel be know that Boule vsed tho wordes of passed signification, for nede & lacke of a worde in mānes bodily speche betokenynge the euerlastynge presence. And therfore worde is moste semelyche in lykeneſſe to euerlastyng presence, he toke his sentence for thynges, that here before ben passed, viterly be immouable, ilyke to þ euerlasting presēce. As thilke that ben there neuer mowe not ben present, so thinges of tyme passed ne mowe in no wyse not ben passed: but al thinges in your tempozal presēce that passen in a lytel while, shulden ben not present. So than in that it is more symilytude to the euerlastyng presence, signification of tyme passed, than of tyme tempozal presence, & so more in accordaunce. In this maner what thinge of these that ben done thorowe fre arbitremēt, or els as necessary, holy wrytte pronouceth, after eternite he speketh, in whiche presēce is euerlasting sothe and nothyng but sothe immouable, nat after tyme, in whiche naught alway ben your wyles & your actes, & right as while they be nat, it is nat nedeful hem to be: so ofte it is nat nedeful that somtyme they shuld be. As how (quod I) for yet wull I be lerned by some ensample. Of loue (quod she) wol I nowe ensample make, sithen I knowe the herd knotte in that prike. Lo, somtyme thou wyttest no arte, ne arte than in no wyl to wyte, & right as while þ wytest nat, or els wolt nat wyte, it is nat nedeful the to wyte, or els wyne to wyte. And for to make þ know viterlyr, that thynges ben other wise in the euerlasting presence, than in tempozal tyme: se nowe my good childe, for somthyng is in the euerlastig presence, than in tempozal tyme, it wos nat in eternyte tyme, in eterne presence shal it nat be. Than no reason defendeth, that sōthynge ne may be in tyme tempozal mouyng, that in eterne is immouable. Forsothe it is no more contrary ne reuers for to be mouable in tyme tempozel, and mouable in eternyte, than nat to be in any tyme, and to be alway in eternite and haue to be or els to come in tyme tempozel, & nat haue be ne nought cōmynge to be in eternyte. Yet neuer the later, I say nat somthyng to be neuer in tyme tempozel, that euer is eternyte, but al onely in somtyme nat to be. For I saye nat thy loue to more in no tyme to be, but to day alone I deny ne it to be, and yet neuer the later it is alwaye in eternyte.

Also (quod I) it semeth to me that cōmynge thing or els passed here in your tēporal tyme to be, in eternite euer now and present owerth nat to be demed, and yet folowerth nat thylke thynge, that was or els shall be, in no maner therto ben passed, or els cōmyng: than viterly shul we deny, for there without ceasyng, it is in his present maner. O (quod she) myne own disciple, nowe gynnest thou able to haue the name of my seruaunte. Thy wytte is clered, away is nowe errour of cloude in vncon-

nynge,

lynge, awaye is blyndneſſe of loue, awaye is thoughtful ſtudy, of medlyng maners haſtely ſhalte thou entre into the ioye of me, that am thyne owne maiſtres. Thou haſte (quod ſhe) in a fewe wordes, wel and clerely concluded moſel of my mater. And right as there is no reuers ne contrarioustye in tho thynges, right ſo without any repugnaūce, it is ſaid ſomthyng to be mouable in tyme tempozel, & foz it be, that in eternite dwelleth immouable nat afoze it be oz after that it is, but without ceſſyng, foz right naught is there after time, that ſame is there euerlaſtynge, that tēpozal lyche ſouryme nys, and foſozne it be it maye not be, as I haue ſayde. Nowe ſothly (qō I) this haue I wel vnderſtāde, ſo that nowe me thynketh that pꝛeſcience of god and fre arbytremēt without any repugnaunce accozden and ꝑ maketh the ſtrength of eternyte, which encloſeth by pꝛeſence during al tymes, and al thinges that ben, han ben, and ſhul ben in any tyme. I wolde nowe (qō I) a lytel vnderſtande ſithen that al thing thus befozne wot, whether thilke wetynge be of tho thinges, oz eis rotlike thynges ben to ben of goddes wetyng, and ſo of god nothynge is: and if euery thyng be thozow goddes weting, and therof take his beyng, than ſhuld god be maker and auctour of badde werkes, and ſo he ſhuld not rightfullye pꝛeſerue the rules of manhynde. (Qō Loue) I ſhall tel the, this leſſon to lerne myne owne trewe ſeruaūt, the noble philoſophical poete, in Engliſh, whiche euermoze him beſyeth and trauayleth righte ſoze my name to encreaſe, wherfoze al that willen me good, owe to do him wozſhip & reuerence bothe, trewly his better ne his pere in ſchole of my rules coude I neuer fynde: he (qō ſhe) in a treatiſe ꝑ he made of my ſeruant Troylus, hath this mater touched, & at ꝑ full this queſtion aſſoyled. Certaynlye his noble ſayenges can I not amende: In goodnes of gētyl manlyche ſpeche, without any maner of nycite of ſtarterꝛs ymagination in wytte and in good reaſon of ſentence he paſſeth all other makers. In the boke of Troylus, the anſwer to thy queſtion mayſte thou lerne, neuer the later yet may lightly thyne vnderſtandynge ſomdele ben lerned, if thou haue knowyng of theſe to foꝛnſaid thiges, with that thou haue vnderſtandyng of two the laſte chapiters of this ſeconde boke, ꝑ is to ſay, good to be ſomthing, and bad to want al maner beyng, foz badde is nothig elſ but abſence of good, and that god in good, maketh ꝑ good dedes ben good, in yuel he maketh ꝑ they ben but nauzt, that they ben bad: foz to nothyng is badneſſe to be. I haue (qō I tho) ynoughe knowynge therin, me nedeth of other thiges to here, that is to ſaye, howe I ſhall come to my blyſſe ſo longe deſyzed.

In this mater to foꝛn declared (qō loue) I haue wel ſhewed, that euery mā hath fre arbitremēt of thiges in his power to do oz vndo what hi liketh. Out of this groūd muſt come the ſpire, that by pꝛoceſſe of tyme ſhal in greatneſſe ſpꝛede, to haue bꝛaunches & bloſomes of waxyng frute in grace, of which the taſte and the ſauour is endeleſſe blyſſe in ioy euer to onbyde. Nowe lady (qō I) that tree to ſet fayne wolde I lerne. So thou ſhalt (qō ſhe) er thou departe hence. The firſt thing thou muſte ſet thy werke on groūde ſiker and good, accozdaunt to thy ſpꝛinges. Foz if thou deſyze grapes, thou goeſt not to the haſel, ne foz to fetchen roſes, thou ſekeſt not on okes: and if thou ſhalt haue hony ſoukels, thou leaueſt the frute of the ſoure docke. Wherfoze if thou deſire this bliſſe i parfite ioy, thou muſt ſet thy purpoſe there vertue foloweth, & not to loke after ꝑ bodily goodes, as I ſaid whā thou were wꝛyting in thy ſeconde booke. And foz thou haſte ſet thy ſelfe in ſo noble a place, and viterly lowed in thine herte ꝑ miſgoyng of thy firſt purpoſe, this ſetteles is ꝑ eſyer to ſpꝛinge, and ꝑ moze lighter thy ſoule in grace to be ylyfted. And trewly thy deſyze, that is to ſay thy wyl, algates more ben ſtedfaſt in this mater without anye chaungynge, foz if it be ſtedfaſt, no man maye it voyde. Yes parde (qō I) my wyll maye ben turned by frendes, and diſeaſe of manace & thꝛetnyng in leſynge of my lyfe and of my lymmes, and in manye other wyſe, that nowe cometh not to mynde. And alſo it mote ofte ben out of thought, foz no remembꝛaunce may holde one thinge contynuelly in herte, be it neuer ſo luſty deſyzed.

Nowe ſe (qō ſhe) thou thy wyll ſhal folowe, thy frewil to be groūded cōtynuelly to abide: It is thy frewyl that thou loueſt and haſt loued, and yet ſhal louen this Pagarite perle, and in thy wyl thou thinkeſt to holde it. Than is thy wil knyt in loue, not to chaunge foz no newe luſt beſyde: this wil tracheth thyn herte from al maner varyeng. But than althoughe

thou be thretened in deth or els in otherwise, yet is it in thyn abitrement to chose, thy loue to voyde or els to holde: And thilke arbytrement is in a maner a iudgement bytwene desyre and thy herte. And if thou deme to loue thy good wyl fayleth, than arte thou worthy no blysse that good wyl shulde deserue: and if thou chose contynuaunce in thy good seruice, than thy good wyl abydeth, nedes blysse folowing of thy good wil must come by strēgth of thilke iudgemēt: for thy first wil ỳ caught thyn herte to abyde, & halte it frō theschaunge with thy reson is accorded. Trewly this maner of wil thus shal abyde, impossible it were to turne if thy hert be trewe, and if euery mā diligently the menynges of his wil consider, he shal wel vnderstande that good wyl knyt with reason, but in a false hert neuer is voyded: for power & might of kepinge this good wyl is thorow lyberte of arbitremē: in hert, but good wil to kepe may not fayle. Eke than if it fayle, it sheweth it selfe that goodwyl in kepyng is not there. And thus false wyll that putteth out the good, anone constrayneth the herte to accorde in louynge of thy goodwyl, and this acordaūce bytwene false wyl & thin herte, in falsyte ben lykened togyther. Yet a lytel wol I say the, in good wil thy goodwilles to rayse & strength. Take hede to me (qō she) howe thy wylles thou shalt vnderstande. Right as ye han in your body dyuers membres, & fyue sondrie wyttes, euerych aparte to his owne doyng, which thynges as instrumētes ye vsen, as your handes aparte to handle, fete to go, tonge to speke, eye to se: Right so ỳ soule hath in him certayne sterynges and strēgthes whiche he vseth as instrumētes to his certayne doynges. Reason is in the soule, which he vseth thinges to know & to proue, & wyl which he vseth to wyne: & yet is neyther wyl ne reason al ỳ soule, but euerych of hem is a thing by him self in ỳ soule. And right as euerich hath thus singuler instrumētes by hē self, they han as wel dyuers aptes & dyuers maner vsinges, & thilke aptes mowen in wyl ben cleped affectiōs. Affection is an instrumēt of willynge in his apetytes. Wherfore mokel folke sayn, if a resonable creatures soule any thinge feruētly wyneth, affectuously he wilneth, & thus may wyl by terme of equinocas in thre wayes ben vnderstāde: One is instrumēt of willing, another is affection of this instrumēt: & ỳ thirde is vse, ỳ setteth it a werke. Instrumēt of willyng is thilke strēgth of the soule, which ỳ rō strayneth to wyne, right as reason is instrument of resons, which ye vsen whan ye loken. Affection of this instrument is a thyng, by whiche ye be drawe desyrously any thynge to wyne in coueytous maner, all be it for the tyme out of youre mynde: as if it come in your thought thilke thing to remembre, anon ye ben willyng thilke to done or els to haue. And thus is instrument wil, & affection is wyl also, to wyne thynge as I said: as for to wyne helth, whan wil nothig theron thinketh, for anon as it cometh to memorie it is in wyl, and so is affection to wyne slepe whan it is out of mynde, but anon as it is remembred wyl wyneth slepe, whan his tyme cometh of ỳ doynge. For affection of wyl neuer accordeth to sickneſſe, ne alway to wake. Right so in a true louers affection of willyng instrument, is to wyne truthe in his seruyce, and this affectiō alway abideth, although he be slepyng or thertued, or els not therou thinkyng, but anon as it cometh to mynde, anon he is stedfast in that wil to abyde. Vse of this instrument forsothe is another thing by him selfe, & that haue ye not but whan ye be doing in wylled thing by affecte or instrumēt of wil purposed or desired, & this maner of vsage in my seruice wisely nedeth to be ruled frō waiters yt enuye closed, from spekers ful of fāgeling wordes, from proude folke & hautayn, ỳ lambes & innocētes bothe scornen & dispysen. Thus in doyng varieth the actes of willynge euerich frō other, & yet ben they cleped wil, & ỳ name of wyl vtterly owen they to haue, as instrumēt of wyl is wyl, whan ye turne into purpose of any thing to don, be it to syt or to stāde, or any such thig els. This instrumēt may ben had, although affect & vsage be left out of doing, right as ye haue sight & reson, & yet alway vse ye grettest wisdōe in hem shal he be, & they in god. Nowe than whan al false folke be ashamed, which wenē al bestyalte & erthly thig be swetter & better to ỳ body, than heuēly is to ỳ soule: this is the grace & the frute ỳ I long haue desired, it dothe me good ỳ sauour to smel. Christ now to ỳ I crye of mercy & of grace, & graūt of thy goodnes to euery maner reder ful vnderstādyng in this leude pamflet to haue, & let no man wene other cause in this werke, than is verily ỳ soth: For enuy is euer redy al innocētes to shende, wherfore I wold that good speche enuy euermore hynder. But

no

no mā wene this werke be sufficiētly maked, for goddes werke passeth mās, no mans wit to parfit werke may by no way purvay thēd: How shuld I than so leude, aughte wene of perfection any ende to get? Neuer the later grace, glory, & laude I yelde & put vp worship ful reuerkers to ꝑ forthfaū god i thre, vñ vnite closed which ꝑ ꝑ heuy lāgour of my sickenesse hath turned into mirth of helth to recouer: for tizt as I was forowed thorow ꝑ glotō cloud of manyfolde sickly sorow, so mirth ayen coming helth hath me gladed & greatly cōforted. I beseche & pray therfore, & I crye on goddes gret pyte & on his mekel mercy, ꝑ this presēt sorges of my flesh mow make medecin & lech craft of my inner mans helth, so ꝑ my passed trespas & trues, thorough weping of myn eyen ben wasche, & I boyded frō al maner disese, & no more to wepe herafter, I now be kept thorow goddes grace: so ꝑ goddes hāde which ꝑ mercyably me hath sorged, herafter in good plite frō thēce mercyably me kepe & defēde. In this boke be many pryuy thinges wipled and folde, vneth shal leude mē ꝑ plites vnfolde, wherfore I pray to ꝑ holy gost he lene of his oyntmēres mēs wittes to clere, & for goddes loue no-mā wōder why orthow this question come to my mynde, for my great lusty desyre was of this lady to be enformed, my leudenesse to amēde. Certes I [illegible] not other mēnes wyties what I shuld aske, or in answere what I shulde saye, I am so leude my selfe, that mekel more lernynge yet me behoueth. I haue made therfore as I coude, but not sufficiently as I wolde, and as mater yaue me sentence, for my dul wytte is hyndred by step mother of forgetyng, and with cloude of vnconnyng, that stoppeth the lyght of my Margarite perle, wherfore it may not shyne on me as it shulde. I desyre not onely a good reder, but also I coueyte and pray a good booke amender, in correction of wordes and of sentence: and onely this mede I coueyte for my trauayle, that euery inseer and herer of this leude fantasye, deuoute horisons and prayers to god the great iudge yelden, and prayen for me, in that wyse that in his dome my synnes mowe ben released & forgeuen: He that prayeth for other, for him selfe trauayleth. Also I praye that euery man parfytly mowe knowe thorow what intencion of hette this treatyse haue I drawe. Howe was it ꝑ sightful Mānna in deserte to chyldren of Israel was spirytuel meate: bodily also it was, for mēnes bodies it norisheth. And yet neuer ꝑ later Christ it signifyed. Ryghte so a iewel betokeneth a gemme, and that is a stone vertuous, or els a perle. Margarite a womā betokeneth grace, lerning, or wisdom of god, or els holy church. If breed thorow vertue is made holy flesche, what is that our god saithe? It is the spirite that yeueth lyfe, the flesche of nothynge it profyteth. Flesche is fleschelye vnderstandynge: Flesh without grace & loue nanght is worth. The letter sleeth, the spirit yeueth lyfesich vnderstādyng. Charyte is loue, and loue is charyte, god graunt vs all therin to be frended. And thus the Testament of Loue is ended.

¶ Thus endeth the Testament of Loue.
And here after foloweth.

The lamentacion
of Mary Magdaleyne.

PLonged in the wawe of mortal distresse
Alas for wo, to whome shal I complayn
Or who shall deuoyde this great heuynesse
Fro me woful Mary, wo ful Magdaleyne
My lord is gon, alas who wrought this tryne
This sodaine chaūce perseth my herte so depe
That nothing can I do, but wayle and wepe

My lorde is gone, ꝑ here in graue was layde
After his great passyon, and dethe cruel
Who hath him thus agayne betrayde?
Or what man here abouten can me tel
Where he is become, the prince of Israel
Jesus of Nazareth, my goostly socour
My parfyte loue, and hope of al honour

What creature hath him bereft carayde?
Or howe might this so sodainly betale
I wolde I had here with him tarryed
And so shulde I haue had my purpose al
I bought oyntmentes ful precious & royal
Wherwith I hoped his corps to anoynted
But he thus gone, my mynde is disapoynted

Whyle I therfore aduertyce and beholde

This pytous chaunce, here in my presence
Ful lyttel marueyle though my herte be colde
Consydryng lo, my lordes absence
Alas that I so ful of negligence
Shulde be founde because I come so late
Al men may say I am infortunate

Cause of my sorow you may understande
(Quia tulerunt dominum meum)
Another is, that I ne may fonde
I wot nere, Ubi posuerunt eum
Thus I must bewayle, Dolorem meum
With herty wepyng, I can no better deserue
Tyl deth approch, my hert for to kerue

My hert oppressh with sodayne auenture
By feruent anguysshe is be wrapped so
That longe this lyfe I may nat endure
Suche is my payne, suche is my mortall wo
Neuertheles, to what partie shall I go
In hope to fynde myne owne turtyl true
My lyues ioy, my souerayne lorde Jesu

Sythe all my ioye, that I call his presence
Is thus remoued, nowe I am ful of mone
Alas the whyle, I made no prouydence
For this mishap, wherfore I sighe and grone
Socour to fynde, to what place might I gon
Fayne I wolde to some man my hert breke
I not to whom I may complayne or speke

Alone here I stande, full sory and ful sadde
Which hoped to haue sene my lorde & kyng
Small cause haue I to be mery or gladde
Remembryng thys bytterfull departyng
In this worlde is no creature lyuyng
That was to me so good and gracious
His loue also than golde more precious

Ful sore I sygbe, without comforte agayne
There is no cure to my saluacion
His brennyng loue, my hert so doth constrayne
Alas here is a wofull permutacion
Wherof I fynde no ioye nor consolacion
Therfore my payne all onely to confesse
With deth I feare wol ende my heuynesse

This wo and anguysshe is intollerable
Yf I byde here, lyfe can I nat sustayne
Yf I go hence my paynes be vncurable
Where hit to finde, I know no place certayne
And thus I not of these thynges twayne
Which I may take, & which I may refuse
My hert is wounded heron to thynke or muse

A whyle I shall stande in thys mournyng
In hope if any vision wol appere
That of my loue might tel some good tiding
Which in to ioy, myzt chaunge my wepig chere
I trust in his grace & his mercy dere
But at the leest, though I therwith me kyl
I shall nat spare to wayle & wepe my fyl

And if that I dye in suche auenture
I can no more, but welcome as my chaunce
My bones shall rest here in this sepulture
My lyfe, my deth, is at his ordynaunce
It shal be tolde in euerlastyng remembraunce
Thus to departe, is to me no shame
And also therof I am nothyng to blame

Hope agaynst me hath her course take
There is no more, but thus shal I dye
I se right wel my lorde hath me forsake
But in my conscyence, cause knowe I none why
Though he be farre hence, and nothyng nye
Yet my woful hert after him doth seke
And causeth teres to ren down by my cheke

Thynkyng alas, I haue loste his presence
Which in this world was al my sustenaunce
I crye and cal [illegible] diligence
But there is no [illegible] gyuen attendaunce
Me to certifie of myne enquiraunce
Wherfore I wyl to al this worlde be waye
How that my lorde is slayne & borne awaye

Though I mourne it is no great wonder
Sythe he is al my ioye in special
And nowe I thynke we be so farre a sonder
That him to se I feare neuer I shal
It helpeth no more after him to cal
Ne after him to enquire in any coste
Alas howe is he thus gone and loste?

The iewes I thynke ful of misery
Sette in malyce, by their befy cure
With force and might of gyleful trechery
Hath enterrmined my lordes sepulture
And borne away that precious fygure
Leuyng of it nothyng, if they haue done so
Marred I am, alas what shal I do

With their vengeaunce insaciable
Nowe haue they him entreated so
That to reporte it is to lamentable

They bete hys body from toppe to the too
Neuer man was borne that felte suche wo
They wounded him alas with al greuaunce
The blode down reyled in most habundaūce

The bloody rowes streamed downe ouer al
They hym assayled so malycyously
With their scourges and strokes beestyal
They spared not, but smote incessauntly
To satisfye their malyce they were ful besy
They spit in his face, they smote here & there
He groned ful sore, and swette many a tere

They crowned him wt thornes sharpe & kene
The vaynes rent, the blode ran down a pace
With blode ouercome were both hys eyen
And boine with strokes was his blessed face
They him entreated, as men without grace
They kneled to hym, & made many a scorne
Lyke helhoundes they haue hym all to torne

Upon a myghty crosse in length and brede
These turmentours shewed their cursidnesse
They nayled hym without pyte or drede
His precious blode braste out in largenesse
They strayned him a long, as men mercilesse
The very ioyntes al to myne apparence
Ryued a sonder, for their great violence

Al this I beh[illegible] with myne eyen twayne
Stode there beside, with ruful attendaunce
And euer me thought, he beyng in that payne
Loked on me, with deedly countenaunce
As he had sayd in his special remembraunce
Farwel Magdalen, depart must I nedes hēs
My herte is, Tanquā cera liquescens

Whiche ruful syght whan I gan beholde
Out of my wyt I almoste distraught
Tare my herte, my handes wrange & folde
And of ꝑ sight my hert dranke such a draught
That many a fal swouning there I caught
I bruised my body, fallyng on the grounde
Wherof I frie many a greuous wounde

Than these wretches, ful of al frowardnesse
Gaue hym to drinke eysel tempred with gal
Alas, that poyson ful of bytternesse
My loues chere caused than to appal
And yet therof myght he not drynke at al
But spake these wordes, as hi thought best
Father of heuen, Consummatum est

Than kneled I downe, in payues outrage
Clippyng ꝑ crosse within myn armes twayn
His blood distilled downe on my vysage
My clothes eke the droppes dyd distayne
To haue dyed for hym I wolde ful fayne
But what shulde it auayle if I dyd so
Sithe he is, Suspensus in patibulo

Thus my lorde ful dere was al disgysed
With blode, payne and woundes many one
Hys veynes braste, his ioyntes al to ryued
Partyng a sonder the flesche fro the bone
But I sawe he hynge not there alone
For Cum iniquis deputatus est
Nat lyke a man, but lyke a lepros beest

A blynde knyght men called Longias
With a spere approched vnto my souerayne
Launsyng his syde ful petously alas
That his precious hert he claue in twayne
The purple blode eke fro the hertes payne
Downe rayled right fast, in most ruful wyse
With chrystal water brought out of paradyse

Whan I behelde thys woful passyon
I wote nat howe, by sodayne auenture
My hert was peersed with very compassyon
That in me remayned no lyfe of nature
Strokes of deth I felte without measure
My dethes woūde I caught, wt wo oppreest
And brought to poynt as my hert shuld breest

The woūde, hert, and blood of my darlyng
Shal neuer slyde fro my remorial
The bytter paynes also of tourmentyng
Within my soule be grauen principal
The speare alas, that was so sharpe withal
So thrilled my herte, as to me [illegible]lyng
That body and soule were at departyng

As soone as I might I releued vp agayne
My brethe I coude not very wel restore
Felyng my selfe drowned in so great payne
Both body & soule me thought wer al to tore
Violent falles greued me right sore
I wept, I bledde, & with my selfe I fared
As one that for his lyfe nothyng had cared

Lokyng vp to that ruful Roode
Sawe first the visage pale of that fygure
But so pytous a sight spotted with bloode
Sawe neuer yet no lyuyng creature
So it exceded the bounder of measure

That mānes mynde, with al his wittes fiue
Is nothing able, that payne for to discriue

Than gan I rere myn armes to vnbrace
Up lyftyng my handes ful mournyngly
I sighed and for sobbed in that place
Both heuen & erth might haue herde me crye
Weping, and sayd alas incessauntly
Ah my swete herre, my goshly paramour
Alas I may nat thy body socour

O blessed lorde, howe fierse and howe cruel
These cursed wightes nowe hath the slayne
Keruing alas thy body entrydel
Wo6de within wo6de, ful bitter is thy payn
Nowe wolde that I might to the attayne
To nayle my body fast vnto thy tree
So that of this payne thou might go free

I can nat reporte ne make no rehersayle
Of my demenyng, with the cyrcumstaunce
But wel I wot the speare with euery nayle
Thirled my soule by inwarde resemblaunce
Whiche neuer shal out of my remembraunce
During my lyfe it wol cause me to wayle
As ofte as I remembre that batayle

Ah ye Iewes, worse than dogges rabyate
What moued you thus cruelly hym to aray
He neuer displeased you nor caused debate
Your loue and true hertes he conueyted aye
He preched, he teched, he shewed ꝑ right way
Wherfore ye like tyrātes wode & waywarde
Now haue hym thus slayne for his rewarde

Ye ought to haue remembred one thing special
His fauour, hys grace, and his magnificence
He was your prince borne, and lorde ouer al
Howe be it ye toke him in smal reuerence
He was ful meke in suffryng your offence
Neuertheles ye deuoured him with one affet
As hungry wolues doth the lambe innocent

Where was your pyte, o people mercilesse
Arming your selfe with falshed & treason
On my lorde ye haue shewed your woodnesse
Lyke no men, but bestes without reason
Your malyce he suffred al for the season
Your payne wol come, thynke it nat to slacke
Man without mercy of mercy shal lacke

O ye traytours & maintayners of madnesse
Into your foly I ascribe al my payne
Ye haue me depryued of ioye and gladnesse
So dealyng with my lorde and souerayne
Nothing shulde I nede thus to complayne
If he had lyued in peace and tranquillyte
Whom ye haue slayne through your iniquite

Farewel your nobleneſſe ꝑ sōtime dyd rayne
Farewel your worthyp, glory and fame
Here after to lyue in hate and disdayne
Marualyle ye not, for your trespace & blame
Vnto shame is tourned al your good name
Upon you nowe wol wonder euery nacion
As people of moste vyle reputacion

These wicked wretches, these houndes of hel
As I haue tolde playne here in this sentence
Were not content my dere6oue thus to quel
But yet they must embelyle hys presence
As I perceyue by couert violence
They haue him conueyed to my displesure
For here is lafte but naked sepulture

Wherfore of trouth and right ful iugement
That their malyce agayne maye be acquited
After my verdyte and auysement
Of false murdre they shal be endyted
Of theste also, whiche shal not be respited
And in al haste they shal be hanged & drawe
I wol my self [illegible] cause in the lawe

Alas yt I with trewe attendaunce
Had styl abydden with my lordes corse
And kept it styl with trewe perceueraunce
Than had nat befal this wofful deuorse
But as for my payne welcome and no force
This shal be my songe where so euer I go
Departyng is grounde of al my wo

I se right wel nowe in my paynes smerte
There is no wounde of so grenous dolour
As is the wounde of my careful herte
Sythe I haue loste thus my paramour
Al swetneſſe is tourned in to sour
Wythe to my herte nothyng may conuey
But he that beareth therof bothe locke & key

The ioye excellent of blyssed paradyse
Maye me alas in no wyse comforte
Songe of angel nothyng may me suffyse
As in myne herte nowe to make disporte
Al I refuse, but that I might resorte
Unto my loue, the wel of goodlyheed
For whose longing I trowe I shal be deed

Of

Of paynful labour and turment corporal
I make therof none exception
Paynes of hel I wol passe ouer al
My loue to fynde in myne affection
So great to hym is my delectation
A thousande times martred wolde I be
His blessed body ones if I might se

About this worlde so large in al compace
I shal not spare to renne my life durynge
My fete also shal not rest in one place
Tyl of my loue I may here some tydinge
For whose absence my hãdes now I wringe
To thynke on him, ceasse shal neuer my mynd
O gentyl Jesu where shal I the fynde

Jerusalem I wol serche place fro place
Syon, the dale of Josophath also
And if I fynde hym not in al this space
By mount Oliuet to Bethany wol I go
These wayes wol I wander and many mo
Nazareth, Bethleem, Mountana, Jude
No trauayle shal me payne him for to se

His blissed face if I might se and fynde
Serche I wolde euery coste and countrey
The fardest parte of Egipt or hote Inde
Shulde be to me but a lytel iourney
Howe is he thus gone or taken away
If I knewe the ful trouth and certente
Yet from this care released might I be

In to wildernesse I thinke best to go
Sithe I can no more tidinges of him here
There may I my life lede to and fro
There may I dwel, and to no man apere
To towne ne byllage wol I come nere
Alone in woodes, in rockes, & in caues depe
I may at myne own wyl both wayle & wepe

Myne eyen twayne withouten baryaunce
Shal neuer cease, I promyse faythfully
There to wepe with great habundaunce
Bytter teares rennyng incessauntly
The which teares medled ful perously
With the very blode euer shal renne also
Expressyng in myne hert the greuous wo

Worldely fode and sustenaunce I desire none
Suche lyuyng as I fynde, such wol I take
Rootes that growen on the graggy stone
Shal me suffyce with water of the lake
Than thus may I say for my lordes sake
(Fuerunt mihi lachrime mee)
(In deserto panes die ac nocte)

My body to clothe it maketh no force
A mourning mantel shalbe sufficient
The greuous woundes of his pytous corse
Shal be to me a ful royal garnement
He departed thus I am best content
His crosse with nayles and scourges withal
Shal be my thought and payne special

Thus wol I lyue, as I haue here tolde
Yf I may any longe tyme endure
But I fere dethe is ouer me so bolde
That of my purpose I can not be sure
My paynes encrease with out measure
For of longe lyfe who can lay any reason
Al thyng is mortal and hath but a season

I sygh ful sore, and it is fette yfet
Myne hert I fele nowe bledeth inwardly
The blody teares I may in no wyse let
Sithe of my payne I fynde no remedye
I thanke god of al yf I nowe dye
Hys wyl perfourmed I holde me content
My soule let hym that hath it me lent

For lenger to endure it is intollerable
My woful herte is inflamed so huge
That no sorowe to myne is comparable
Sithe of my mynde I fynde no refuge
Yet I hym require as rightful iuge
To deuoyde fro me the inwarde sorowe
Lest I lyue not to the nexte morowe

Within myne hert is impressed ful sore
His royal forme, his shappe, his semelynesse
His porte, his chere, hys goodnesse euermore
His noble persone with al gentylnesse
He is the welle of al parfytnesse
The very redemer of al mankynde
Him loue I best with herte, soule and mynde

In his absence my paynes ful bytter be
Right wel I may it fele nowe inwardely
No wonder is though they hurte or slee me
They cause me to crye so rufully
Myne herte oppressed is so wonderfully
Onely for hym, which so is bright of blee
Alas I trowe I shal hym neuer se

My ioye is translate ful farre in exile
My myrthe is chaunged in to paynes colde

My

My lyfe I thinke endureth but a whyle
Anguisshe and payne is that I beholde
Wherfore my handes thus I wringe & folde
In to this grane I loke, I cal, I pray
Yet remayneth, and lyfe is borne away

Now must I walke and wander here & there
God wot to what parties I shal me dresse
With quakyng hert, weppyng many a tere
To seke out my loue and al my swetnesse
I wolde he wyst what mortal heuynesse
Abouт myn herte reneweth more and more
Than wolde he nat kepe pyte longe in store

Without him I may not longe endure
Hys loue so sore worketh within my brest
And ener I wepe before this sepulture
Sighyng ful sore, as myne herte shulde brest
Duryng my lyfe I shal optayne no rest
But mourne and wepe, where that euer I go
Makyng complaynt of al my mortal wo

Alas I crye, but there is no audyence
My comyng hyder was hym for to please
My soule oppresst is here with his absence
Alas he lyst not to set myne herte in ease
Wherfore to payne my selfe withal disease
I shal not spare tyl he take me to grace
Or els I shal sterue here in thys place

Ones if I might with him speke
It were al my ioy, with parfyt plesaunce
So that I might to hym myne herte breke
I shulde anone deuoyde al my greuaunce
For he is the blysse of very recreaunce
But nowe alas, I can nothyng do so
For in stede of ioy naught haue I but wo

His noble corse within myn hertes crote
Depe is graued, whiche shal neuer slake
Nowe is he gone to what place I ne wote
I mourne, I wepe, and al is for his sake
Sith he is paste, here a vowe I make
With hertely promyse, & therto I me bynde
Neuer to cease tyl I may hym fynde

Unto his mother I thynke for to go
Of her haply some comforte may I take
But one thinge yet me feareth and no mo
Yf I any mencyon of him make
Of my wordes she wolde tremble and quake
And who coude her blame, she hauing but one
The sone borne away, the mother wol mone

Sorowes many hath she suffred trewly
Sith that she first conceyued him and bare
And seuyn thynges there be most specially
That drowneth her hert in sorowe and care
Yet lo, in no wyse may they compare
With this one nowe, the whiche if she knewe
She wolde her paynes euerichone renewe

Strat was her sorowe by reason sayeng
Whan in the temple Symeon Justus
Shewing to her, these wordes prophesieng
(Tuam animam pertransibit gladius)
Also whan Herode that tyraunt furious
Her childe pursued in euery place
For his lyfe went neither mercy ne grace

She mourned whan she knewe hym gone
Ful longe she sought or she him founde ayene
Whan he went to deth hys crosse him vpon
It was to her syght a rewful payne
Whā he hong therō, betwene theues twayne
And the speare vnto his herte thrust right
She swouned, and to the ground there pight

Whan deed and blody in her lappe lay
His blyssed body, bothe handes & fete al tore
She cryed out and sayd, nowe welaway
Thus arayde was neuer man before
Whan hast was made hys body to be bare
Unto his sepulture the mayne
Unmether for wo she coude her sustayne

These sorowes seuin, like swerdes euery one
His mothers herte wounded fro syde to syde
But if she knewe her sonne thus gone
Out of this worlde she shuld with deth tryde
For care she coude no lenger here abyde
Hauyng no more ioy nor consolacyoun
Than I here standing in this stacioun

Wherfore her to se I dare nat presume
Fro her presence I wol my selfe refrayne
Yet had I leuer to dye and consume
Thā his mother shuld haue any more payne
Neuertheless her sonne I wolde se ful fayne
His presence was very ioye and swetnesse
His absence is but sorowe and heuynesse

There is no more, sith I may him nat mete
Whom I desyre aboue al other thyng
Nede I must take the sour with the swete
For of his noble corse I here notyding
Ful ofte I crye, and my handes wring

Myne

Myne herte alas, relenteth al in payne
Whiche wol brast bothe senewe and vayne

Alas howe vnhappy was this woful houre
Wherin is thus myspended my seruyce
For myn entent and eke my trewe labour
To none effecte may come in any wyse
Alas I thynke yf he do me dispyse
And lyst not to take my symple obseruance
There is no moze, but dethe is my fynaunce

I haue him called, Sed non respondet mihi
Wherfoze my mirth is tourned to mournyng
O dere lozde, Quid mali feci tibi
That me to cõfozte I fynde no erthly thyng
Alas, haue compassyon of my eryeng
Yf fro me, Faciem tuam abscondis
There is no moze, but Consumere me bis

Within myne hert is grounded thy fygure
That al this wozldes hozrible tourment.
May it not aswage, it is so without measure
It is so brennyng, it is so feruent
Remember lozde I haue ben diligent
Euer the to please onely and no mo
Myne herte is with the where so euer I go

Therfoze my dere darlyng, Trahe me post te
And lette me not stande thus desolate
(Quia non est, qui consoletur me)
Myne hert for the is disconsolate
My paynes also nothyng me moderate
Nowe if it lyst the to speke with me a lyue
Come in hast, for my herte a sonder wyl ryue

To the I proffer lo my poore seruyce
The for to please after myne owne entent
I offre here, as in deuout sacrifyce
My boxe replete with precious oyntment
Myne eyen twayne, weppng sufficient
Myne herte with anguyshe fulfylled is alas
My soule eke redy for loue aboute to pas

Naught els haue I the to please or pay
For yf myn hert were golde or precious stone
It shulde be thyne without any delay
With hertely chere thou shulde haue it anone
Why suffrest thou me than to stande alone
Thou hast I trowe my wepyng in disdayne
Or els thou knowest nat what is my payne

Yf thou withdrawe thy noble dalyaunce
For ought that euer I displeased the
Thou knowest right wel it is but ignoraunce
And of no knowlege for certaynte
Yf I haue offended lozde forgyue it me
Gladde I am for to make ful repentaunce
Of al thyng that hath ben to thy greuaunce

Myne herte alas, swelleth within my brest
So sore oppzest with anguishe & with payne
That al to peces forsothe it wol brest
But if I se thy blyssed cozse agayne
For lyfe ne deth I can nat me refrayne
Yf thou make delay thou mayst be sure
Myne hert wol lepe in to thys sepulture

Alas my lozd, why farest thou thus with me
My tribulacion yet haue in mynde
Where is thy mercy? where is thy pyte?
Whiche euer I trusted in the to fynde
Sõtime thou were to me both good & kynde
Lette it please the my prayer to accept
Whiche with teares I haue here bewept

On me thou oughtest to haue bery routh
Sith for the is al this mournyng
For sith I to the yplighted firste my trouth
I neuer varyed with discordyng
That knowest thou best my owne darlyng
Why constraynest thou me thus to wayle?
My wo forsothe can the nothyng auayle

I haue endured without variaunce
Right as thou knowest, thy louer iust & trew
With hert & thought aye, at thyn ordinaunce
Lyke to the saphire alwaye in one hewe
I neuer chaunged the for no newe
Why withdrawest thou my presence
Sith al my thought is for thyne absence

With hert intier, swete Lozde I crye to the
Enclyne thyne eares to my peticioun
And come, Velociter exaudi me
Remembre myne hertes disposicioun
It may not endure in this condicioun
Therfoze out of these paynes, Libera me
And where thou arte, Pone me iuxta te

Let me beholde, O Jesu thy blyssed face
Thy faire glozious angelike vysage
Bowe thyne eares to my complaynt, alas
For to conuey me out of thys rage
Alas my lozde, take fro me this dõmage
And to my desire for mercy condiscende
For non but thou, may my greuaũce amende

Nowe

Nowe yet good lorde, I the beseche and pray
As thou rayse dst my brother Lazarous
From berthe to lyfe the fourth day
Came ayen in body and soule precious
As great a thyng mayst thou shewe vnto vs
Of thy selfe, by power of thy godhed
As thou dyd of him, lyenge in graue deed

Myne hert is wounded with thy charite
It brenneth, it flameth incessauntly
Come my dere lorde, Ad adiuuandum me
Nowe be not longe my payne to multiplye
Lest in the meane tyme I departe and dye
In thy grace I put bothe hope and confidence
To do as it pleaseth thy hye magnificence

Floodes of berthe, and tribulacyoun
In to my soule I fele entred ful depe
Alas that here is no consolacyoun
Euer I wayle, euer I mourne and wepe
And sorowe hath wounded myn hert ful depe
O dere loue, no maruayle though I dye
(Sagitte tue infixe sunt mihi)

Wandringe in this place, as in wyldernesse
No comforte haue I, ne yet assuraunce
Desolate of ioye, replete with fayntnesse
No answere receyuyng of myne enquiraunce
Myne herte also greued with displesaunce
Wherfore I may saye, O deus deus
(Non est dolor sicut dolor meus)

Myne hert expresseth, Quod dilexi multum
I may not endure though I wolde fayne
For nowe, Solum superest sepulchrum
I knowe it right wel by my huge payne
Thus for loue I may not lyfe sustayne
But o god, I muse what ayleth the
(Quod sic repente precipitas me)

Alas, I se it wyl none otherwyse be
Nowe must I take my leaue for euermore
This bitter payne hath almost discomfite me
My loues corse I can in no wyse restore
Alas to this wo that euer I was bore
Here at this tombe nowe must I dye & starue
Deth is aboute my hert for to carue

My testament I wol begyn to make
To god the father, my soule I cōmende
To Iesu my loue, that dyed for my sake
My herte and al, bothe I gyue & sende
My whole loue my lyfe maketh ende

My body also to this monument
I here bequeth, bothe boxe and oyntmet

Of al my wylles, lo nowe I make the last
Right in this place within this sepulture
I wol be buryed whan I am deed and past
And vpō my graue I wol haue this scripture
Here within resteth a goostly creature
Christes trewe louer, Mary Magdalayne
Whose hert for loue, brake in peces twayne

Ye vertuous women, tender of nature
Ful of pyte and of compassyoun
Resorte I pray you vnto my sepulture
To singe my dirige with great deuocioun
Shewe your charite in this condicioun
Sing with pyte and let your hertes wepe
Remembring I am deed and layed to slepe

Than whan ye begyn to parte me fro
And ended haue your mourninge obseruaūce
Remembre where so euer that ye go
Alway to seeche and make due enquerraunce
After my loue, myne hertes sustenaunce
In euery towne and in euery village
Yf ye may here of this noble ymage

And if it happe by any grace at laste
That ye my [illegible] in any coste
Say that his Magdalayne [illegible]ered and paste
For his pure loue hath yelded vp the goost
Say that of al thing I loued hym most
And that I myght not this deth eschewe
My paynes so sore dyd euer renewe

And in token of loue perpetual
Whan I am buryed in this place present
Take out myne hert, the very rote and al
And close it within this boxe of oyntment
To my dere loue make therof a present
Kneelyng downe with wordes lamentable
Do your message, speke fayre and tretable

Say that to hym my selfe I cōmende
A thousande tymes with hert so fre
This pore token say to hym I sende
Pleaseth his goodnesse to take it in gree
It is his owne of right, it is hys fee
Whiche he asked, whan he sayd longe before
Gyue me thy hert, and I desyre no more

I due my lorde, my loue so fayre of face
I due my turtle done so freshe of hue

I due

I due my mirthe, & due al my solace
I due alas, my sauiour lorde Jesu
I due the gentelest that euer I knewe
I due my most excellent paramour
Fayrer than rose, sweeter than lylly flour

I due my hope of al pleasure eternal
My lyfe, my welth, and my prosperite
Myne herte of golde, my perle oriental
Myne adamant of parfyte charite
My chefe refuge and my feyeire
My comforte, and al my recreatioun
Fare wel my parpetual saluatioun

Farewel myne emperour celestyal
Most beauty ful prince of all mankynde
I due my lorde, of herte moste lyberal
Farwel my sweetest, bothe soule and myndc
So louyng a spouse shal I neuer fynde
I due my soueraygne, and very gentyleman
Farewel derre herte, as hertely as I can

Thy wordes eloquent flowyng in swetnesse
Shal no more alas, my mynde reconforte
Wherfore my lyfe must ende in bytternesse
For in this worlde shal I neuer resorte
To the, whiche was myne heuenly disporte
I se alas it wol none other be
Nowe farwel the grounde of al dignite

I due the fayrest that euer was borc
Alas I may nat se your blessed face
Nowe welaway that I shal se nomore
Thy blessed vilage, so replete with grace
Wherin is pynted my parfyte solace
I due myne hertes roote and al for euer
Nowe farewel, I must from the disseuer

My soule for anguysshe is nowe ful thursty
I faynt right sore for heuynesse
My lorde, my spouse: Cur me derelequisti
Sith I for the suffre al this distresse
What causeth the to leme thus mercyelesse
Sith it the pleseth of me to make an ende
(In manus tuas) my spirite I commende.

Finis.

The Remedy of loue.

Seyng the manyfolde inconuenyence
Fallynge by vnbridled prosperite
Which is not kepyd wt moral prudence
Nothyng more worthye than youthes frute
Moued I am, bothe of right and equite
To youthes wele, somwhat to write
Wherby he may him selfe safecondyte

First I note, as thyng moste noyous
Vnto youthe a greuous malady
Amonge vs called loue encombrous
Verynge yonge people straungely
Ofte by force causeth hem to dye
Age is eke turmented by loue
Wyneth the gyrdle, and not aboue

Wherfore this werke, which is right labo-
For age me nede nat in honde to take (rous
To youthe me oweth to be obsequious
Nowe I begyn thus to worke for his sake
Whiche may the feruence of loue a slake
To the louer, as a mitigatyue
To him that is none a preseruatyue

That mighty lorde whiche me gouerneth
Youthe I meane, measure if I pace
In euery mater whiche him concerneth
First as is behoueful, I wol aske grace
And forthwithal in this same place
Er I begyn, I wol kneie and saye
These fewe wordes, and him of helpe praye

Flouryng youth, whiche haste auauntage
In strength of body in luste and beaute
Also a preeminyng haste aboue age
In many a synguler commodite
Nowe be it one thyng he hath bey ende the
To thy most profyte and greatest auayle
Which thuld the cõduit, I mean sad cõsaile

And yet good lorde, of a presumption
I nyl dreyaue thy myght and deite

I lyue but vnder thy protection
I am thy subiecte, I weare thy lyuerie
For thou arte grounde of my prosperite
And freshest floure of al my garlonde
My synguler ayde, as I wel vnderstonde

But as he that oweth his lorde best seruyce
And enryze faythe, his honour to supporte
Right so I speke, and in none other wyse
I knowelege my selfe one of the leste sorte
Of thy seruauntes, to our elders comforte
Drawe sadde counsayle to the if thou lyste
The and thy power, who may than resyste

Fye on age, vnder wordes fewe
And his erronyous opinyon
What spekest of him, which saith most vntrue
Al youthe to be of yl disposycion
Dampneth vs al without exception
And for a colerable auauntage
He sayethe in him resteth counsayle sage

Wel may sadde counsayle in him rest
But yet his dedes ben ferre therfro
He may say with our paryshe preest
Do as I saye, and not as I do
For I my selfe knowe one or two
Wel stryken in age, for neyghbourheede
Wolde to theyr neyghbours wyues bedde

He wyl in presence of the yonge man
Her clyppe and kysse, ye and do wone lay
To bleare his eye, thus he sayethe than
O suffre yet olde Wozel to play
Nowe haue I done that I can or maye
Thus he sayethe, her husbonde to queme
That he nor no man shulde not misdeme

In worde nor dede, nedeth him not be coye
It is impossyble that he do amysse
If the yonge man speke, anon he sayethe boye
To rebuke age, deserueth the not wis
Thus his olde face aye his warraunte is
Al is in him, sleyght and subtilte
And ferre from reason I tel the

And shortly age is not aboue me
Age is impotent, and of no resystence
Age vnweldy may not fyght nor flye
What were age without my defence
Sad counsayle sayst gyueth him assystence
Reason is strongest where that I ame
Wherfore in thy sayenge thou arte to blame

Sythe reason to me is rather acompanyed
Than vnty age, whiche is the opinion
Of euery wyse man not to be denyed
And sythe sadde counsayle proceedeth of reson
Sad counsayle in me hath his chefe mansion
This is no naye, but what is the ende
Of this thy sualyon what doest entende

Age to compare vnto thyn excellence
I nyl presume him so to dignifye
Ye be not egal, howe be it experyence
Him auauntageth, for the most certaynly
Him inteacheth what thyng to him is contrary
And ofte to fore se it, and warely eschewe
Whiche thou neuer assayedst yet nor knewe

Experyence maketh a man most certayne
Of any thyng eerthly, and of necessyte
Sad counsayle requireth certaynte playne
So ferre to mone thus wherto nede we
But to my purpose, as thou commaundest me
Shortly myne entent is thus, and none other
Vnder thy lycence to counsayle my brother

Howe shuldest gyue any counsayle so yonge
Lackyng experyence vnto thyne owne speche
I repose me, I wote wel as for thy tonge
Wyl serue the right wel, but than for to teche
I doute me lest that thy witte wol not reche
Youthe & experience thou sayst be not couert
Howe shuldest than teache wel vnexpert

Scripture wytnesseth that god wil oft shytte
Fro the bye wytted man, & shewe it to ỹ childe
To him I meane that of his owne wytte
Presumeth not, but is debonayre and mylde
By counsayle I entende bertue for to bylde
Which of mine elders parte haue I borowed
And part of experiẽce, which I haue forowed

Wel than, if it be as thou letteste fare
Shewe forthe thy doctrine be not agaste
I wol the supporte, loke thou not spare
Maugre age, though he frete or gnaste
To aske age counsayle herin were but waste
Boldely begyn, go forthe to thy processe
Feare not sythe thou arte of suche sureneste

Grant mercy lorde syth it the dothe lyke
To lycence me, nowe I wol and dare boldlye
Assatle my purpose, with scriptures auctorysed
My werke wol I groũde, vnderset, & fortefie
Aspire my begynnynge, o thou woode fury

Illecto

Recto with thy ſuffers, and in eſpecial
To the mother of ielouſye Juno I cal.

¶ Explicit prologus.

His werke who ſo ſhal ſe
or rede
Of any incõgruite do me
not impethe
Ordinately behoueth me
firſt to procede
In deduction therof, in
maner as the leche
His pacientes ſickneſſe oweth firſt for to ſeche
The which knowen, medecyne he ſhuld apiye
And ſhortly as he can, than ſhape a remedye

Right ſo by counſayle, wylling the to exhorte
O yong mã proſperous, which doth aboũde
In thy floures of luſte belongeth on the ſorte
Me firſt to conſider what is roote & grounde
Of thy miſchefe, which is playnly founde
Woman fared with fraude and diſceyte
To thy confuſyon moſte allectyue bayte.

Flye the miſwoman, leſte thenthe diſceyue
Thus ſaith Salomõ, which cauzt was fully
The falſheed of womẽ i his dayes to cõceiue
The lyppes of a ſtrũger hen ſweter than hony
Her thzote he ſayth ſoupled wt oyle of flatery
Howbeit the ende and effecte of al
Bytter is than any wormwode or gal

Flye the miſwoman, louyng thy lyfe
Ware the ſtraungers blande eloquence
Straunge I cal her that is not thy wyfe
Of her beaute haue no concupiſcence
Her countenaunce, pretendyng benevolence
Beware her ſignes and eye ſo amyable
Holde it for ferme, they ben diſceyuable

Lo an enſample what women be
In their ſignes and countenaunce thortly
I wol ſhewe the howe louers thre
Loued one woman right entierly
Eche of them knewe others malady
Wherfore was al their dayly labour
Who conde approche next in her fauour

At ſondzie ſeaſons, as fortune requyzeth
Neuerally they came to ſe her welfare
But ones it happened, loue them ſo fyzeth
To ſe their lady they al wolde not ſpare
Of others comynge none of them were ware
Tyl al they mette, where as they in place
Of her lady ſawe the deſyred face

To ſupper ſette, ful finally they ete
Ful ſobre and demure in countenaunce
For there taryed none of hem for any mete
But on his lady to gyue attendaunce
And in ſecrete wyſe ſome ſignyfyaunce
Of loue to haue, whiche parceyuyng ſhe
Fetely executed thus her properte

In due ſeaſon, as ſhe alway aſpyed
Euery thyng to execute conuenyently
Her one louer firſt frendly ſhe eyed
The ſeconde ſhe offred the cuppe curtefly
The thirde ſhe gaue token ſecretly
Underneth the bozde ſhe trade on his fote
Through his entrayles tykled the herte rote

By your leue, might I here aſke a queſtion
Of you my maiſters that ſewe loues trace
To you lykely belongeth the ſolution
Whiche of theſe thre ſtode nowe in grace
Clerely to anſwere ye wolde aſke long ſpace
The mater is doutful and opynable
To acertayne you I wol my ſelfe enable

Of the forſayd thre my ſelfe was one
No man can anſwer it better than I
Herely of vs beloued was there none
But wattes packe we bare al by and by
Whiche at laſte I my ſelfe gan eſpye
And tyme as me thought, than I left ꝑ dauce
O thoughtful herte, great is thy greuaunce

Hence fro me hence, that me for to endyte
Halpe aye here afore, o ye muſes nyne
Whylõ ye were wont to be myn ayde & lighte
My penne to directe, my braine to enlumine
No lenger alas may I ſewe your doctryne
The freſhe luſty meters, that I wõt to make
Haue ben here afore, I vtterly forſake

Come hyther thou Hermes, and ye furies all
Which ſer ben vnder vs, vygh the nether pole
Where Pluto reigneth, o kyng infernal
Sende out thyn arpies, ſende anguiſh & dole
Myſery and wo, leaue ye me not ſole
Of right be preſent muſt payne & eke turmẽt
The pale derthe deſerueth not to be abſent

To me nowe I cal al this lothſome forte

Myr paynes terrate, my lorowes to augmẽt
For worthy I am to be bare of al comforte
Thus sythe I haue consumed and mispent
Not only my dayes, but my fyue folde talent
That my lord comitted me, I can not recom-
I may not to derely abye my negligẽce (pẽce

By the pathe of penaunce yet wol I reuerte
To the welle of grace, mercye there to fetche
Wilfulest not god the meke conuyte herte
Of the corbe crowe, alas þ I wold not retche
And yet is it not late in the seconde wetche
Mercy shal I purchace by incessaunt creyeng
The mercyes of our lorde euer shall I synge

But wel mayste thou wayle wicked woman
That thou shuldest disceiue thus any innocẽt
And in recompence of my synne, so as I can
To al men wol I make a leue this monumẽt
In the wig parte of thy falsheed is myn entẽt
For al were to mocke, I cannot wel I wote
The cause the weth plainly he þ thus wrote

If al the erthe were parchement scribable
Spedy for the hande, and al maner wode
Were hewed & proporcioned to pennes able
Al water pyke, in damme or in stode
Euery man beyng a parfyte scribe & good
The curfydnesse yet and diserte of women
Coude not be shewed by the meane of penne

I fye al odyous resemblaunces
The dyuels dronde cal women I might
Wherby man is enchesed to mischaunce
Or a stynkyng rose that fayre is in syght
Or deedly empoyson, lyke the suger whyte
Whiche by his swetnesse causeth man to taste
And sodainly sleeth & bryngeth him to his laste

It is not my maner to vse suche langage
But this my doctrine, as I may lawfully
I wol holly grounde with auctorite sage
Myllyng bothe wisdom, and vertue eche fy
Wyne and women into apostasy
Cause wyse men to fal, what is that to say
Of wysdome cause them to forget the way

Wherfore the wyse man bothe the aduyse
In whose wordes can be founde no leasyng
With the straunger to sytte in no wyse
Whiche is not thy wyfe, fal not in clyppyng
With her, but beware eke of her kyssyng
Kepe with her in wyne no altercacion

Lest that thyne herte fal by inclynacion

Way a man thynkest hyde and safe lay
Fyre in his bosom, without enpayrement
And brenning of his clothes, or whether he may
Walke on hote coles, his fete not brente
As who say the nay, and wherby is ment
This forsayd prouerbe and symilytude
But that thou rydde the playnly to denude

From the flatterers forgetyng her gyde
The gyde of her youth, I meane shamfastnes
Whiche shuld cause her maidenhed to abide
Her goddes beheste eke the ful recheleste
Not retchyng, cõmytteth it to forgetfulneste
Neyther god ne shame in her hauyng place
Nedes muste suche a woman lacke grace

And al that neygh her in way of syn
To tourne of grace shal lacke the influence
The pathes of lyfe no more to come in
Wherfore first fende the with sapyence
Remembryng god, and after with prudence
To thyne owne wele that they the kepe
Unto thyne herte, leste her wordes crepe

In this boke where I take my moste grounde
And in his prouerbes sage Salomon
Telleth a tale [illegible] is playnly founde.
In the fyfth chaptre, wherfore in dede don
Or meuely feyned to our instruction
Let clerkes determyne, but this am I sure
Moche lyke thyng I haue had in vre

At my wyndowe sayth he I loked out
Fayre yonge people, where I sawe many
Amonge hem al, as I loked aboute
Of a yonge man forfrumed I lent myn eye
Estraunged from his myndе it was lykely
By the strete at a corner, nyghe his owne hous
He went aboute with eye right curyous

Whan that the day his light gan withdrawe
And the nyght approched in the twylyght
Howe a woman came and met him I sawe
Talkyng with him vnder shade of the nyght
Nowe blessed be god (quod she) of his myght
Whiche hath fulfylled myne hertes desyre
Slaked my payne, whiche were hote as fire

And yet myne auctour, as it is skyl
To folowe, I muste tel her arayment
She was ful nyce, soules lyke to spyl

As nyce in countenaunce yet as in garment
For langyng she was of rest impacient
Wandrynge styl in no place she stode
But restlesse nowe and nowe out she yode

Nowe in the house, nowe in the strete
Nowe at a corner she stonderh in awayte
Incessauntly besy her prayer for to gete
To bring to the lure whom she dothe layte
Nowe where I lefte, vnto my mater strayte
I wol turne agayne, howe she him mette
Swetely kyssed, and frendly him grette

With wordes of curtesye many and dyuerse
Right as in parte I haue before tolde
Nowe as I canne I purpose to reherse
Howe she flateryng sayd with vysage bolde
I haue made vowes & offrynges manyfolde
For thy sake, O myn herte, o my loue dere
This day I thanke god al perfourmed were

Therfore I came out, and made thus aserte
Very desyrous your welfare to se
Nowe I haue seue you, plesed is myn herte
In faythe shal none haue my loue but ye
As trewe as I am to you be to me
I pray you herrely dere herte come home
No man shalde be to me so welcome

And in good fayth, the lothe for to say
Your comynge to me came in my thought
Harke in your eare, my bedde fresshe and gay
I haue behanged with tapettes newe bought
From Egipte, & from ferre countrees brought
Steyned with many a lusty freshe hue
Exceedyng gelde or iasper in value

My chambre is strowed with myrre & ensēce
With fore sauoryng aloes, & with synamome
Breathyng an aromatyke redolence
Surmountyng olybane, in any mans dome
Ye shal betwene my brestes rest if ye come
Let vs haue our desyred halsyng
For we may safe be tyl in the morwyng

Myn husbonde is not at home, he is went
Forthe in his iourney, a ferre way hence
I dagge with money he hathe with him hent
As him thought nedeful for his expence
Unto my worde gyue faythe and credence
Nowe is the moone ponge, & of lyght dulle
Er he come home it wol be at the fulle

Thus craftely hath she him beset
With her lyme toddes, panter, and snare
The sely soule caught in her nette
Of her fayred mouthe, alas nothyng ware
Thus is he lefte graceles and bare
Of helpe, comforte, and goostly socour
And furthermore, as sayth myne auctour

As a beest ledde to his dethe dothe pante
This ponge man foloweth her in ꝑ stounde
And as a wanton lambe ful ignorante
Howe he is pulled and drawen to be bounde
Unto the tyme he hath his dethes wounde
And lyke a byrde that hasteth to the gryme
Not knowyng the peryl of his lyte therin

Now gentle sonne sayth Salomon take hede
My wordes in thy breest kepe and make faste
Let her not thy mynde in her wayes mislede
Be not disceyued, lese not thy taste
Many hath she wounded, many downe caste
Many stronge by her hath loste their brethe
Her wayes, wayes of hel ledyng to dethe

And in this lytel naration precident
The womans manyfolde gylt I attende
The ponge man alas howe she hath shent
Disceyued her husbāde, her owne next frende
In these bothe her god she dothe offende
To breke her spousaile, to her is of no weight
Furdermore to shewe womās craft & sleight

A woman at her doze sat on a stal
To se folke passe by stretes of the cyte
With eye & countenaunce eke she gan cal
If there be any piety one, come nere to me
Come hyther ye pygges nye, ye lytel babe
At last she sayd to a ponge man herteles
Of her disceyte vnware and defenceles

Moche swetter she sayth, & moze acceptable
Is drinke whan it is stolen priuely
Than whan it is taken in fourme anowable
Breed hyd and gotten ieoperdously
Must nedes be swete, and semblably
Uenyson stolne is aye the swetter
The ferther the narower sette the better

And who this woman saith Salomon festes
The yong mā woteth not who she bothe fede
Of the derke depenesse of hel ben her gestes
Beware ponge man therfore I the rede
And howe be it chefely for thy good spede

This werke to cõpyle, I haue take i charge
I muste of pyne my chaute enlarge

With the fely man whiche is thus beggyed
Her hul bande I meane, I wol wepe & waile
His paynful infortune, wherby reuyled
Cautelesse he is, neuer to counsayle
Euery man yonge and olde wol him assayle
With wordes of occasiõ, with the loth name
And alas good soule, he nothinge to blame

But the that conde so yl do and wolde
Bere be the blame for her demerite
God leaue that oppzobrous name cokolde
To apzopze to him as in dispyte
Mantake yet we wolde if we might
Of this worde the trewe ortography
The very discent and ethymology

The wel and grounde of the first inuencion
To knowe the ortography we must deryue
Whiche is coke and colde, in compolycion
By reason, as nyghe as I can contryue
Than howe it is wzitten we knowe belyue
But yet lo, by what reason and grounde
Was it of these two wordes compounde

As of one cause to gyue very iudgement
Ethemology let vs first beholde
Ethe letter an hole worde dothe repzesent
As C, put for colde, and O, for olde
K, is for knaue, thus dyuers men holde
The first parte of this name we haue founde
Let vs ethymologyse the seconde

As the first fynder mente I am sure
C, for calot, for of, we haue O
L, for leude, D, for demeanure
The crafte of the enuentour ye may se lo
Howe one name signifyeth persons two
A colde olde knaue, cokolde him selfe wening
And eke a calot of leude demeanyng

The seconde cause of thympolycion
Of this forsayde name was ielousye
To be ielouse is greatest occasyon
To be cokolde, that men can alpye
And though the passion be very fyzie
And of contynuel feruence and hete
The pacient aye suffreth colde on his fete

And who that is ielous, and aye in a dzede
Is ful of melancoly and gally yze
His wyues nose if she mysse trede
He wol cuze of, ye and conspyze
His dethe who that wol her desyze
Whiche the perceyuyng bzaideth his gal
And anon his great wodenesse dothe fal

As sone as she hath knytte him that knotte
Nowe is he tame that was so ramagious
Mekely lysteth he downe to tabeth his lotte
Layde bennowe his lokes so furyous
And he but late as a cocke bataylous
Hote in his quarel, to auenge him bolde
Nowe is he called bothe coke and colde

This sayeng, to al curtesy dissonante
Whiche semeth that it of malyce grewe
In this rude tzaytyse I wol not plante
As parcel therof, but onely to shewe
The opinyon of the talcarpte shrewe
Whiche in yl sayeng is curt mery
No man as I therof so wery

But I as parcel of this my boke
Wol gratte in some sadde counsayle wherby
The wedded man, if he daigne to loke
In it, the better shal mowe him gye
And pzouyde for his sayde infortune
Which as I haue sayd, with him complayne
I wol, as parte of his great payne

As moste expedyent to his wele
I wolde al ielouly were abiecte
If he be ielous, that he it concele
And in his labour be circumspecte
To knowe her wayes, if they seme suspecte
And not for to bzeke, for one wzde broken
She wol not mysse but she wol be wzoken

Forbyd her not, that thou noldest haue done
For loke what thynge she is forbode
To that of al thynges she is moste pzone
Namely yf it be yl and no good
Tyl it be executed she is nyghe woode
Suche is woman, and suche is her feate
Her crafte by crafte, labour to defete

If thou herafter, nowe a syngle man
Shuldest be ielous if thou haddest a wyfe
Wedde not but if thou canst wyse woman
For els shuldest lede a careful lyfe
That thou moste lothest shulde be ful ryfe
Yet I nyl gaynsay matrymony
But Melius est nubere quam vri

That

That is to say, better is in wedlocke
I wyfe to take, as the churche dothe kenne
Than to be vnder the flesshes yoke
In fleshly lust alway for to brenne
But as I sayd, for al ielous menne
Mo they lyue chaste, I holde it lasse yl
That they wedde not, than them selfe spyl

The syngle man whiche is yet to wedde
And not the wedded man, thus I rede
To warne hym nowe he is to farre spedde
It is to late hym for to forbedde
But let hym take as for his owne nede
Suche counsayle as is hym before tolde
These wordes folowyng eke the beholde

Thy water to kepe the wyse man doth teche
That thou in no wyse let it haue yssue
At a narowe ryfte, way it wol seche
And semblably the woman vnto we
To gyue her frewalke in all wyse eschewe
If she at large, nat at thyn hande walke
She wol the shame, thou shalt it not balke

Wedded or syngle, thus sayth the wyse man
Her that bothe day and nyght euer more
Lythe in thy bosome, wyfe or yet lemman
Loue not to hote, lest thou repent sore
Lest she the bryng in to some yl lore
Thy wyfe nat to loue yet I nyl suppoze
But that thou dote not, thus I the exhoze

Lo if thou loue her, loue eke thyn honeste
Be she not ydel, for what wol betyde
Yf she syte ydle, of very necessyte
Her mynde wol serche ferre and eke wyde
Namely yf she be not accompanyde
Howe accompanyed, not with youge men
But with maydens I meane or women

Mayden seruauntes be right conuenient,
In house to helpe to do her seruyce
In whom she may vse her commaundement
In the season at her owne deuyce
To teache hem good, yeue her thyne aduyce
To make them huswyues, thus besyuesse
May yet refrayne her from ydlenesse

But byde not her that thou wolte haue do
Of thyne entent that myght be letyng
But craftely encourage her therto
By other meanes, as by cõmendyng
And not to moche, but duely mengyng
Bothe prayse and blame, and in thy reason
Fyrst prayse wysely the place and season

Of faythful wyl, and herte ful tendre
One thynge I eal in to remembraunce
Agayne, whiche though my wytte be slendre
After my power and suffysaunce
I purpose to make a purueyaunce
Sythe women of nature ben chaungeable
Frale not ware also discryuable

Be it that thy wyfe be excellently good
That none be better of dispoſicion
In proceſſe of tyme she myzt tourne her mode
By some myſſe lyuers inſtygacion
Dyuers men to thylke occupacion
Aplyen dayly, mynde and eke herte
From her goodneſſe women to peruerte

If thou aſpye any ſuſpecte perſon
Drawe to thy wyfe, beware in al wyſe
To hym nor her of thy ſuſpection
Breke not one word, though thyn herte agriſe
Kyndle no fyre, no ſmoke wol aryſe
Thoughe he be of a corrupte entent
She peraduenture is not of aſſent,

Explicit.

The complaynte of Mars and Venus,

Lladeth ye louers in the morowe gray
Lo Venus rysen among yon rowes re de
And floures freshe ho noure ye thys day
For whã the sõne vprist, than wol they spyrde
But ye louers that lye in any drede
Flyeth leste wycked tonges you aspye
Lo yonde the sonne, the enmyes of ielousye

With teares blewe, and with a wouñded herte
Taketh your leue, a lyb sayne John to borowe
Apeseth somwhat of your payues smerte

Tyme cometh eche, ꝑ ceſſen thal your ſorowe
The glad nyght is worthe an heuy morowe
Saynt Valentyne a foule thus herde I ſing
Upon thy day or ſonne gan vp ſpring

Yet ſange this foule I rede you al awake
And ye that haue not choſen in humble wyſe
Without repenting cheſeth your make
Yet at the leſt, renoueleth your ſeruyce
And ye that haue ful choſen as I deuyſe
Confermeth it perpetually to dure
And paciently taketh your auenture

And for the worthyppe of this highe feſt
Yet wol I in my bryddes wyſe ſynge
The ſentence of the complaynt at the leſt
That wofful Mars made at the departyng
Fro freſhe Venus in a morownyng
Whan Phebus with his fyrie torches rede
Ranſaked hath euery louer in his dede

Whylom the thre heuyns lorde aboue
As wel by heuenyſche reuolution
As by deſerte hath wonne Venus his loue
And ſhe hath take hym in ſubiection
And as a maiſtreſſe taught him his leſſon
Cōmaundyng him neuer in her ſeruyſe
He were ſo bolde no louer to diſpyſe

For ſhe forbade him ielouſy at al
And cruelte and boſte, and tyrannye
She made him at her lyſte ſo humble a tal
That whan ſhe dayned to caſt on him her eye
He toke in pacience to lyue or dye
And thus ſhe bridleth him in her maner
With nothing, but with ſcorning of her chere

Who reygneth nowe in bliſſe but Venus
That hath this worthy knight i gouernaūce
Who ſingeth now but Mars ꝑ ſeruyth thus
The fayre Venus, cauſer of pleſaunce
He bynt him to perpetuel obeyſaunce
And ſhe bynte her to loue him for euer
But ſo be that his treſpace it diſcuer

Thus be they knyte, and reigned as in heuē
By lokyng moſt, as it fel on a tyde
That by her bothe aſſent was ſet a ſteuen
That Mars ſhal entre as faſt as he may glyde
In to her nexte palays to abyde
Declaryng his courſe eyl ſhe had him take
And he prayed her to haſte her for his ſake

Than ſayde he thus, myne hertes lady ſwete
Ye knowe wel my miſcheſe in that place
For ſyderiye eyl that I with you mete
My lyfe ſtante there in auenture and grace
But whan I ſe the beaute of your face
There is no drede of dethe may do me ſmerte
For al your luſt is eaſe to myne herte

She hath ſo great compaſſion of her knighte
That dwelleth in ſolytude eyl ſhe come
For it ſtode ſo, that ylke tyme no wighte
Counſayled him, ne ſayde to him welcome
That nygh her wit for ſorow was ouercome
Wherfore ſhe ſpedde as faſte in her way
Almoſte in one daye as he dyd in tway

The great ioye that was betwixe hem two
Whan they be mette, there may no tonge tel
There is no more but vnto bedde they go
And thus in ioye and blyſſe I lette hem dwel
This worthy Mars ꝑ is of knighthode wel
The flouer of fairneſſe happeth in his armes
And Venus kyſſeth Mars the god of armes

Sojourned hath this Mars, of which I rede
In chambre amydde the palays pryuely
A certayne tyme, eyl him fel a drede
Through Phebus that was comen ha[illegible]ly
Within the p[illegible]ates ſ[illegible]denly
With torch in honde, of whi[illegible] ſtremes bryȝt
On Venus chambre, knocketh ful lyghte

The chambre there as laye this freſhe quene
Depayned was with white boles grete
And by the light she knewe that ſhon ſo ſherne
That Phebus came to bren hem with hys hete
This ſilly Venus ny dreynt in teares wete
Embraſeth Mars, and ſayd alas I dye
The torch is come, ꝑ al this world wol wyte

Up ſterte Mars, him lyſte not to ſlepe
Whan he his lady herde ſo complayne
But for his nature was not for to wepe
In ſtede of teares from his eyen twayne
The fyrie ſparcles ſprongen out for payne
And hente his hauberke that lay him beſyde
Flye wold he nought, ne might him ſelfe hyde

He throweth on his helme of hugy weight
And gyrt him with his ſwerde, and in his honde
His mighty ſpeare, as he was wont to feight
He ſhaketh ſo, that it almoſt to wonde
Ful heuy was he to walken ouer londe

He

He may not holde with Venus company
But badde her flye lesse Phebus her espy

O woful Mars alas, what mayst thou sayn
That in the palays of thy disturbaunce
Arte lefte behynde in payn to be slayne
And yet there to is double thy penaunce
For she that hath thyne hert in gouernaunce
Is passed haste the stremes of thyne eyen
That ȝ nere swift, wel mayst ȝ wepe a teyen

Nowe flyeth Venus in to Cicinius tour
With woyde coyse, for feare of Phebus lyght
Alas, and there hath she no socour
For she ne founde ne sey no maner wyght
And eke as there she had but lytel myght
Wherfore her seluen for to hyde and saue
Within the gate she stodde in to a caue

Darke was this caue, & smokyng as the hel
Nat but two paas within the yate it stode
A nauvel day in darke I let her dwel
Now wot I speke of Mars furious & wode
For sorow he wolde haue seen his hert blode
With ȝ he might haue done her no companye
He ne rought not a myte for to dye

So feble he wext for hete and for hys wo
That any gh he [illegible] ineth endure
He passeth but a nerre in dayes two
But neuertheles, for al hys heuy armure
He foloweth her that is his lyues cure
For whose departyng he toke greater ffe
Than for al his brennyng in the fyre

After he walketh softely a paas
Complayning that it pyte was to here
He sayde, O lady bright Venus alas
That euer so wyde a compas is my sphere
Alas, whan shal I mete you here in fere
This twelue dayes of April I endure
Through ielous Phebus this misauenture

Nowe god helpe sely Venus alone
But as god wolde it happed for to be
That while ȝ wepig Venus made her mone
Cicinius rydyng in his chyuauche
Fro Venus Valanus might his palays se
And Venus he saluteth, and maketh chere
And her receyueth as his frende ful dere

Mars dwelleth forth in hys aduersyte
Complayning euer in her departyng
And what hys cõplaynt was remembreth me
And therfore in this lusty mornwning
As I best can, I wol it sayne and sing
And after that I wol my leaue take
And god yeue euery wight ioye of his make.

The complaynt of Mars.

The order of complaynt requi-
reth skylfully
That yf a wyght shal playne
pytously
There mote be cause wher-
fore that men playne.
Or men may deme he playneth folyly
And causeles alas that am not I
Wherfore the grõde & cause of all my payne
So as my troubled witte may it attayne
I wol reherse, nat for to haue redresse
But to declare my grounde of heuynesse

The first tyme alas, that I was wrought
And for certayne effectes hyder brought
By hym that lordeth eche intellygence
I yaue my trewe seruyce and my thought
For euermo, howe dere I haue it bought
To her that is of so great excellence
That what wight ȝ sheweth first her offence
Whan she is wrothe & taketh of hym no cure
He may not longe in ioye of loue endure

This is no fayned mater that I tel
My lady is the very sours and wel
Of beaute, lustc, fredome, and gentylnesse
Of ryche array howe dere men it sel
Of al dispozte in whiche men frendly dwel
Of loue and play, and of benigne humblesse
Of sowne of instrumentes of al swetnesse
And therto so wel fortuned and thewed
That thzoughe ȝ wozlde her goodnes is shewed
What wonder is than though that I be sette
My seruyce on suche one that may me knette
To wele or wo, sithe it lythe in her myght
Therfore myne herte for euer I to her hette
Ne trewly for my deth shal I not lette
To ben her trewest seruant and her knyght
I flatter nat, that may were euery wyght
For this day in her seruyce shal I dye
But grace be, I se her neuer with eye

To whom shal I playne of my distresse
Who may me help, who may my hert redresse
Shal

Shal I complayne vnto my lady free
Nay certes, for she hath suche heuynesse
For feare and eke for wo, that as I gesse
In lytel tyme it wolde her bane be
But were she safe, it were no force of me
Alas that euer louers more endure
For loue so many perylous auenture

For though so be that louers be as trewe
As any metal that is forged newe
In many a cace hem tydeth ofte sorowe
Sometyme her ladies wol nat on hem rewe
Sometyme if that ielously it knewe
They might lightly lay her heed to borowe
Sometyme enuyous folke vntonges borowe
Deprauen hem alas, whom may they please
But he be false, no louer hath hys ease

But what auayleth suche a longe sermoun
Of auentures of loue vp and doun
I wol retourne and speken of my payne
The poynt is this of my distruccioun
My right lady, my saluacioun
Is in affray, and not to whom to playne
O herte swete, o lady souerayne
For your disease I ought wel swoom a twele
Though I none other harme ne dede fele

To what fyne made the god that sytte so hye
Beneth hym loue other companye
And straineth folke to loue maugre her heed
And than her ioye for aught I can espye
Ne lasteth not the twynkelyng of an eye
And some haue neuer ioye eyl they be deed
What meneth this, what is this mistheed
Wherto constrayneth he his folke so fast
Thing to desyre but it shulde last

And though he made a louer loue a thyng
And maketh it seme stedfast and durying
Yet putteth he in it suche mysauenture
That eest nys there in his yeuyng
And that is wonder that so iuste a kyng
Dothe suche hardnesse to hys creature
Thus whether loue breke or eis dure
Algates he that hath with loue to done
Hath after wo, than chaunged is ỳ Moone

It semeth he hath to louers enuyte
And lyke a fyther, as men may al day se
Bayteth his angle hoke with some plesaunce
Tyl many a fythe is wode to that he be
Ceased therwith, and than at erst hath he
Al his desyre, and therwith al mischaunce
And though the lyne breke he hath penaunce
For with that hoke he wounded is so sore
That he his wages hath for euermore

The broche of Thebes was of suche kynde
So ful of rubies and of stones of Inde
That euery wight that sette on it an eye
He wende anone to worthe out of his mynde
So sore the beaute wolde his hert bynde
Tyl he it had, him thought he must dye
And whan that it was his than shuld he drye
Suche wo for drede aye while that he it had
That wel nygh for the feare he shulde mad

And whan it was fro his possessyon
Than had he double wo and passyon
That he so fayre a iewel hath forgo
But yet this broche, as in conclusyon
Was not the cause of hys confusyon
But he that wrought it enfortuned it so
That euery wight ỳ had it shulde haue wo
And therfore in the werkyng was the dyce
And in the coueytous that was so myce

So fareth it by louers, and by me
For though my lady haue so greate beaute
That I was made to, I had gette her grace
She was not cause of myne aduersyte
But he that wrought her, as mote I thee
That put suche a beaute in her face
That made me coueyten and purchace
Myne owne dethe him wyte I that I dye
And myne vnwyt that euer I clambe so hye

But ye hardy knyghtes of renowne
Sithe that ye be of my defensyowne
Al be I not worthy to so great a name
Yet sayne theis certes I am your patrone
Therfore ye ought haue some compassyone
Of my disease, and take it not a game
The prowdest of you may be made ful tame
Wherfore I pray you of your gentylesse
That ye complayne for myne heynesse

And ye my ladies that ben trewe and stable
By way of kynde ye ought to ben able
To haue pyte of folke that ben in payne
Nowe haue ye cause to clothe you in sable
Sith that your empyre the honorable
Is desolate, wel ought ye to playne
Nowe shulde your holy teares fal and rayne
Alas your honour and your empyre

Nigh

Nygh deed for drede, ne cast her not thenyce

Complayneth eke ye louers al in fere
For her that with vnfayned humble chere
Was euer redy to do you socour
Complayneth her that euer hath be your dere
Complayneth beaute, fredome, and manere
Complayneth her that endeth your labour
Complayneth thilke ensample of al honour
That neuer vyld but gentylnesse
Kytheth therfore in her some kyndnesse

¶ The complaynt of Venus.

Here nys so high comforte to my plesaunce
whan that I am in any heynesse
As for to haue layser of remembraunce
Upon the manhode and the worthynesse
Upon the trouthe, and on the stedfastnesse
Of hym whose I am al whyle I maye dure
There ought to blame me no creature
For euery wight prayseth his gentylesse

In him is bounte, wisedome, & gouernaunce
wel more than any mannes wytte can gesse
For grace hath so fer forth him auaūce
That of knighthod he is parfyte rychesse
Honour honoureth him for his noblesse
Therto so wel hath fourmed him nature
That I am his for euer I hym ensure
For euery wight prayseth his gentylesse

And nat withstandyng al hys suffysaunce
hys gentyl herte is of so great humblesse
To me in worde, in werke, & in countenaunce
And me to serue is al his besynesse
That I am sette in very sykernesse
Thus ought I shylde wel myne auenture
Sith that him lyste me seruen and honour
For euery wyght prayseth hys gentylesse

Nowe certes loue it is ryght conuenable
That men ful dere abye thy noble thynges
As wake a bedde, and fasten at the table
Weppyng to laugh & synge in complayninges
And downe to cast vysage and lokinges
Often to chaunge vysage and countenaunce
Playe in slepynge and dremen at the daunce
Al the reuers of any gladde felyng

Jelousy he hanged by a table
She wolde al knowe through her espyeng
There dothe no wight nothyng so resonable
That al nys harme in her ymagynyng
Thus dere abought is loue in yeuyng
Whiche ofte he yeueth without ordynaunce
As sorowe ynough, and lytel of plesaunce
Al the reuers of any gladde felyng

A lytel tyme hys yeft is agreable
But ful acombrous is the dysynge
For subtel ielousy the dyscreynable
Ful often tyme causeth dissolutynge
Thus ben we euer in drede and suffryng
In no certayne, we languyshen in penaunce
And haue wel ofte many an harde mischaunce
Al the reuers of any gladde felyng

But certes loue, I saye not in suche wyse
That for to scape out of your lace I myent
For I so longe haue ben in your seruyce
That for to lete of wyl I neuer assent
No force though ielousye me turment
Suffyseth me to se hym whan I may
And therfore certes to myne endyng day
To loue him best, shal me neuer repent

And certes loue, whan I me wel aduyse
Of any estate that man may represent
Thā haue ye made me through your frāchise
Chese the best that euer in erthe went
Nowe loue wel hert, & loke thou neuer stent
And lette the ielous putte it in assaye
That for no payne wol I not say naye
To loue him best, shal I neuer repent

Herte to the it ought ynoughe suffyce
That loue so highe a grace to you sent
To chose the worthyest in al wyse
And most agreable vnto myne entent
Seke no ferther, neyther way ne went
Sith ye haue suffysaunce vnto my paye
Thus wol I ende this cōplaynig or this lay
To loue him best, shal I neuer repent.

¶ Lenuoye.

Princes receyueth this cōplayning in gree
Unto your excellent benygnite
Directe after my lytel suffysaunce
For elde, that in my spirite duelleth me
Hath of endyting al the subtelte
Welnigh berafte out of my remembraunce

And

And eke to me it is a great penaunce
Sith tryne in Englythe hath suche scarcite
To folowe worde by worde the curiosyte
Of Granson lout, of hem ỹ make in Fraūce.

Explicit.

There after foloweth the letter of Cupide.

Upide, vnto whose commaundement
The gentyl kynrede of goddes on hye
And people infernal ben obedyent
And al mortal folke ferren buskly
Of the goddesse sonne Cythera o ney
To al tho that to our deite
Ben subiectes, hertely gretyng fende we

In general we wol that ye knowe
That ladies of honour and of reuerence
And other gentylwomen haven sowe
Suche stede of complaynt in our audience
Of men that do hem outrage and offence
That it our eares greueth for to here
So pytous is the effecte of this matere

Wasshyng al londes, on the lytel yle
That cleped is Albion, they most complayne
They say that ther is croppe and rote of gyle
So con tho men dissymule and fayne
With standing dropes in her eyen twayne
Whan that her hertes feleth no distresse
To blynden women with her doublenesse

Her wordes spoken be so sighyngly
With so pytous chere and countenaūce
That euery wight that meneth trewely
Demeth they in herte haue suche greuaunce
They say so intolrable is her penaunce
That but her lady lust to shewe hem grace
They right anone must steruen in the place

Ah lady myne say they, I you ensure
As tothe me grace, and I shal euer be
Whyle that my lyfe may last and endure
To you as humble and lowe in eche degre
As possible is, and kepe al thyng as sterre
Right as your selfe lyste that I do
And eke myne herte more brasse a two

Ful harde it is to knowe a mannes herte
For out warde may no man the trouth deme
Whan worde out of mouth may none sterte
But it by reson semed euery wyght to queme
So it is sayd of herte as it wolde seme
O faythful woman ful of innocence
Thou art discryued by false apparence

By processe moueth ofte womans pyte
Weening al thyng were as these men sey
They graunt hem grace of her benignite
For that men shulde not for her sake dey
And with good hert sette hem in the wey
Of blyssful loue, kepe it if they conne
And thus otherwhyle women bethe ywonne

And whan this man the pan hath by the stele
And fully is in his possessyoun
With that women kepeth he no more to dele
After yf he may fynde in the toun
Any woman hys blynde affectioun
Unto bethe we, yuel mote he prene
A man for al his othes is harde to brene;

And for that euery false man hath a make
As euen euery wyght is light to knowe
Whan this traitour this woman hath forsake
He fast spedeth hym vnto hys felowe
Tyl he be there his herte is on a lowe
His false discryte may hym not sukkyse
But of his trayson telleth al the wyse

Is this a faire auaunt, is thys honour
A man hym selfe accuse thus and diffame
Is it good to confesse hym selfe a traytour
And dyng a woman to sclaundrous name
And tel howe he her body hath do shame
No worthyppe may be thus to him conquet
But great disclaunder vnto hym and her

To her nay, yet was it no repreue
For al for nerue was that she wrought
But he that brewed hath al this mischefe
That spake so faire, a falsely inwarde thought
His be the sclaunder, as it by reson ought
And vnto her thanke perpetuel
That in suche a nede helpe can so wel

Although though mens sleight and subtylte
A sely simple and innocent woman
Betrayed is, no wonder sythe the cyte
Of Troye, as the storie tel can
Betrayed was through the discryte of man

And

Ded sette on fyre, and al downe ouerthrowe
And finally destroyed as men knowe

Betray nat men eyres great and kynges
What wight is it that can shape remedy
Ayenst theese falsely purposed thinges
Who can the crafte suche crafres telpy
But man, whose wytte is euer redy tapy
To thyng that sowneth in to falsehede
Women bethe ware of false men I rede

And furthermore haue these men in vsage
That where they nat lykely ben to spede
Suche as they ben, with a double visage
They procuren for to purswe her nede
He prayeth him in his cause to procede
And largely guerdoneth he his trauayle
Lytel wote women howe men hem assayle.

Another wretche vnto his felowe sayth
Thou sythest fairr, she that the hath fryed
Is false, inconstaunt, and hard no fayth
She for the rode of folke is so defyred
And as an horse fro day to day she is hyred
That whan thou twynnest fro her company
Cometh another, and blered is thyne eye

Nowe picke on fast, and ryde thy journey
Whyle thou art there, for she behind thy backe
So lyberal is, she wol nothyng withsey
But smartly of another take a smacke
Thus fare these women al the packe
Who so hem trusteth hangred mote he be
Euer they desyre chaunge and noueke

Wherof procedeth this but of enuy
For he him selfe her ne wynne may
He speketh her repriefe and vyliany
As mānes blabbyng tong is wont alway
Thus dyuers men ful ofte make assay
For to disshourde folke in sondrie wyse
For they may nat eschewe her empryse

Many one eke wolde for no good
That hath in loue his tyme spent and sped
Wen wist that his lady his asking withstode
Er that he were of her playnly refused
Or waste and payne all that he had mused
Wherfore he can none other remedy
But on his lady shapeth him to lye

Euery woman he sayth is lyght to gete
Can none say nay, if she be wel ysought
Who so may leyser haue with her to trete
Of his purpose shal he fayle nought
But he on madnesse be so depe vronghe
That he shende al with open hamlynesse
That louen women, they doten as I gesse

To sclaunder women thus what may profite
To gentylesse namely that hem arme shulde
In defence of women, and hem delyte
Is that the ordre of gentylesse wolde
If that a man lyst gentyl to be holde
He muste al eschewe that therto is contrary
A sclaundrous tonge is his great aduersary

A foule vyce is of tonge to be lyght
For who so moche clapperth gabbeth ofte
The tonge of man so swyfte is and so wight
That whan it is reysed vp on lofte
Reason is shewed so slowly and softe
That it him neuer ouertake may
Lorde so these men ben trusty in assay

If be it that men fynde one woman vyce
Inconstaunt, recheleesse, and varyable
Deignous, proude, fulfylled of malyce
Without fayth or loue, and disceyuable
Slye, queynt, false, in al vntrust culpable
Wicked, fierse, or ful of enuie
Yet folowyth it not that suche al women be

Whan the hygh god angels fourmed had
Amonge hem al, where there were none
That founden was malycious and bad
Yes al men wote there were many one
That for her pryde fyl fro heuen anone
Shuld mē for thy yeue al angels proude na-
Nay, he that ỹ sustreyneth is to blame (me

Of twelue apostles, one a traytour was
The remenante yet good were and trewe
So if it happe men fynde prestas
O woman false, suche good is to eschewe
And deme not ỹ they al therfore be vntrewe
I se wel memes owne falsenesse
Hem causeth women to trust the lesse

O euery man ought haue an herte trouthe
Vnto a woman, and deme her honourable
Where his shape be thycke or slendre
Or he be good or badde, it is no fable
Euery wight wote that wittes hath resonable
That of a woman he discended is
Than is it shame of her to speke amysse

A wicked tre good frute may not forth bring
For suche the frute is as is the tre
Take hede of whom thou toke thy begynyng
Let thy mother be myrrour vnto the
Honour her, if thou wolte honoured be
Dispyse her than nat in no manere
Lest that therby thy wickednesse apere

An olde prouerbe sayd is in englysshe
That bryde or foule is ful dishonest
What that he be, and holde ful chutysshe
That dyeth to defoule his owne nest
Wen to say wel of women it is the best
And naught to dispyse hem ne deprsaue
If they wol her honour kepe or saue

The ladyes euer complayne hem on clerkes
That they haue made bokes of her disdaine
In whiche they dispyse womē & her werkes
And speke of hem great reprefe and shame
And rauseleste yeue hem a wicked name
Thus they dispysed be on euery syde
Disclaundred and belowen on ful wyde

Tho forn bokes maken mencion
Howe women betrayde in especial
Adam, Dauid, Sampson, and Salomon
And many one mo, who may reherce hem al
The treyson that they haue do and shal
The worlde her malyce may not comprehēde
As clerkes sayne, for it hath none ende

Ouyde in his boke called Remedye
Of loue, great reprefe of women writeth
Wherin I trowe he dyd great folye
And euery wight p̄ in suche case him deliteth
A clerkes custome is whan he endyteth
Of women, be it prose, ryme, or vers
Say they be wicked, al knowe he the reuers

And that boke scholers lerned in her childhed
For they of women beware shulde in age
And to loue hem euer be indrede
Sythe to disceyue is set al her corage
They say of parel mē should cast thauantage
Namely of suche as men haue in dewrapped
For many a man by women hath mishapped

No charge is what so these clerkes sayne
Of al her writyng I do no cure
Al her labour and trauayle is in vayne
For betwene me and my lady nature (dure
Shal not be suffred, while the worlde may
Thus these clerkes by her cruel tyrannye
On sely women kythen her maystrye

Whylom for many of hem were in my cheyne
Tyed, and nowe for dewe dly age
And vnlust, may not to loue attreyne
And sayne nowe that loue is but dery dotage
Thus for they hem selfe lacken corage
They folke excyte by her wicked sawes
For to rebel ayenst me and my lawes

But maugre hem that blame women moste
Suche is the force of myne impression
That sodainly I can fri her hoste
And al her wronge ymagination
It shal not be in her election
The fouleste flutte in al the towne to refuse
If that me lyste, for al that they conne muse

But her in herte as brennyngly desyre
As though she were a ducheste or a quene
So can I folkes hertes set on fyre
And as me lyst sende hem love or teene
They that to women be wher so kene
My sharpe percyng strokes howe they smyte
Shul fele & knowe howe they kerue and byte

Parde this clerke, this subtyl Ouyde
And many an other disceyued have be
Of women, as is knowe al wyde
What no men more, and that is great deynte
So excellent a clerke as was he
And other mo that couden ful wel preche
Betrapped were, for aught that they coude (teche

And trusteth wel that it is no meruayle
For women knowen playnly her entent
They wyste howe sorely they coude assayle
Hem, and what falsheed they in herte mente
And thus they clerkes in her daunger hente
With o venym an other is distroyed
And thus these clerkes ofte were anoyed

These ladyes, ne this genteyls neuertheleste
Were none of tho that wrought in this wise
But suche as were bertuleste
They quytten thus these olde clerkes wyse
To clerkes lesse ought suffyse
Than to dispraue women generally
For worthyp shul they none get therby

If that these men, that louers hem pretende
To women were faythful, good, and trewe

And

And dredde hem to discryue, or to offende
Wosmen to loue hem wolde not eschewe
But euery day hath man an herte newe
Ye on one abyde can no whyle
What force is it suche a wight to begyle

Men beare eke women vpon honde
That lightly and without any payne
They wome be, they can no wight withstõde
That his distrase lyst to hem complayne
They be so freele, they may hem not refrayne
But who so lyketh hem may lyghtly haue
So be her hertes easy into graue

To mayster Johan de Moone, as I suppose
Than it was a leude occupacioun
In makyng of the Romante of the rose
So many a slyghe ymaginacioun
And perylles for to tollen vp and doun
The longe procesſe, so many a slygh cautel
For to discryue a sely damoysel

Nought can I say, ne my wytte comprehẽde
That arte, payne, and subtylte shulde sayle
For to conquere, and sone make an ende
Whan men a feble place shal assayle
And sone also to venquyche a batayle
Of whiche no wight may make resystence
Ne herte hath none to make any defence

Than mote folowe of necessyte
Sythe arte asketh so great engryns payne
A woman to discryue what so she be
Of constaunce be they not so bacayne
As that some of these clerkes sayne
But they be as women ought to be
Sadde, constante, and fulfylled of pyte

Howe frendly was Medea to Jason
In conquerynge of the fleece of golde
Howe falsely quyt he her trewe affection
By whom bycraft he gate as he wolde
Howe may this man for shame be so bolde
To falsen her, that fro his dethe and shame
Him kept, and gate him so great prise & name

Of Troy also the traytour Eneas
The fairhelle wretche, howe he him forswore
To Dydo, ỹ qurne of Cartage was (swore
That him relieued of his smertes sore
What gentylesse might she haue do more
Than she with herte vnfayned to him kydde
And what mischefe to her therof after betidde

In my legende of natures may men fynde
Who so lyketh therin for to rede
That othe ne behest may man bynde
Of reprouable shame haue they no drede
In mannes herte trouthe hath no stede
The soile is naught, there may no trouth gro
To women namely it is not vnknowe (we

Clerkes sayne also there is no malyce
Vnto womans wicked crabbydnesse
O woman, howe shalt thou thy selfe cheryce
Sythe men of the suche harme wytnesse
Beth ware women of her sykelnesse
Kepe thyne owne, what men clappe or crake
And some of hem shal smerte I vndertake

Malyce of women what is it to drede
They slee no man, distroye no cytees
Ne oppresse folke, ne ouerlede
Betray empires, realmes, or duchees
Ne byreuen men her londes ne her mees
Enpoyson folke, ne houses set on fyre
Ne false contractes make for no hyre

Trust, parfyte loue, entyre charyte
Feruent wyl, and entalented corage
Al thewes good, as sytteth wel to be
Haue women euer of custome and vsage
And wel they conne mannes yre aswage
With soft wordes, discrete & benygne (sygne
What they be inward they shew out ward by

Womans herte vnto no crueltc
Enclyned is, but they be charytable
Pytous, deuonte, ful of humylite
Shamefaste, debonayre, and amyable
Dredeful, and of wordes measurable
What women these haue not paraventure
Folowyth not the waye of her nature

Men sayne our first mother natheleſſe
Made al mankynde lese his lyberte
And naked it of ioye doutelesse
For goddes heste disobeyed she
Whan she presumed to taste of the tre
That god forbade, that she eate therof shold
And ne had the dyuel be, nomore she wolde

The enuyous swelling, that the fende our foe
Had vnto man in herte for his welthe
Sent a serpent, and made her for to go
To discryue Eue, a thus was mans welthe
Byraft him by the fende in a stelthe

The woman not knowyng of that diſceyte
God wote ful ferre was it from her conceyte

Wherfore I ſay, this good woman Eue
Our father Adam diſceyued nought
There may no man for diſceyte it preue
Properly, but that ſhe inwerte and thought
Had it compaſſed firſt or ſhe it wrought
And for ſuche was not her impreſſyon
Men may it cal no diſceyte of her by reaſon

Ne no wight diſceyueth, but he purpoſe
The fende this diſceyte caſte, and nothing ſhe
Than is it wronge to deme or ſuppoſe
That of his harme ſhe ſhulde the cauſe be
Wyte the fende, and his be the maugre
And excuſed haue her innocence
Saue onely that ſhe brake obedyence

And touchyng this, ful fewe men there be
Unnethes any date I ſafely ſay
Fro day to day, as men may al day ſe
But that the heſte of god they diſobay
Haue this in mynde ſirs I you pray
If that ye be diſcrete and reſonable
Ye wol her holde the more excuſable

And where men ſay in man is ſtedfaſtneſſe
And woman is of her corage vnſtable
Who may of Adam beare ſuche a wytneſſe
Telleth me this, was he not chaungeable
They bothe weren in o caſe ſemblable
Saue wylyng the fende diſceyued Eue
And ſo dyd ſhe not Adam by your leue

Yet was this ſynne happy to mankynde
The fende diſceyued was for al his ſleyghte
For aught he coude him i his ſleighres winde
For his treſpace came fro heuen o n heyght
God, to diſcharge man of his weyght
Fleſhe and bloode toke of a birgyne
And ſuffred dethe, him to delyuer of pyne

And god, to whom there may nothing hyd be
If he in woman knowen had ſuche maiyte
As men recorde of hem in generalte
Of our lady of lyfe reperatryce
Nolde haue be borne, but that ſhe of byce
Was voyde, and ful of vertue wel he wyſte
Endoweb, of her to be borne him lyſte

Her heaped vertue hath ſuche excellence
That al to leane is mannes faculte
To declare it, and therfore in ſuſpence
Her dewe prayſyng put nedes muſt be
But thus I ſay, verely that ſhe
Next god, beſt frende is that to man longeth
The key of mercy by her gyrdle hongeth

And of mercy hath euery man ſuche nede
That refyng that, farwel the ioy of man
And of her power now taketh rizt good hede
Ihe mercy may wel, and purchace can
Diſpleſeth her not, honoureth that woman
And other women al for her ſake
And but ye dd, your ſorowe ſhal awake

In any boke alſo where can ye fynde
That of the werkes of dethe or of lyfe
Of Jeſu, ſpelleth or maketh any mynde
That women him forſoke for wo or ſtryfe
Where was there any wight ſo enterpryſe
Aboute him as woman, proued none
The apoſtles him forſoken euerychone

Women forſoke him not for al the faythe
Of holy churche in woman lefte onely
This is no leſs, for thus holy wrytte ſayethe
Loke and ye ſhal ſo fynde it hardely
And therfore I may wel preue therby
That in woman reigneth ſtable conſtaunce
And in men is the chaunge of varyaunce

Thou precious gēme of maydes Margarete
That of thy bloode dredſt none effuſion
Thou louer trewe, thou mayden manſuete
Thou conſtante woman in thy paſſion
Ouercame the fendes temptacion
And many a wight converted thy doctryne
Unto the faythe of holy god thou virgyne

But vnderſtādeth this, I onely cōmende her
By encheſon of her virgynyte (nought
Truſteth it came neuer in thought
For euer werre I ayenſt chaſtyte
And euer ſhal, but lo this meueth me
Her louyng herte, and conſtante to her lay
Dyue out of remembraunce I ne may

Nowe holdeth this for ferme, and for no lye
That this trewe and iuſte commendation
Of women tel I for no flatterye
Ne bycauſe of pryde or elation
But onely lo, for this entencion
To yeue hem corage of perſeueraunce
In vertue, and her honour to auaunce

The

The more vertue, the lasse is the pride
Vertue so digne is and so noble in kynde
That vyce and he wol not infere abyde
He putteth vyces cleane out of his mynde
He flyeth fro hem, he leaueth hem behynde
O woman that of vertue arte hostresse
Great is thy honour and thy worthynesse

Than wol I thus conclude and determyne
We you commaunde our mynistres echone
That redy ye be out hostes to enclyne
That of these false men our rebel sone
Ye do punyshment and that anone
Voyde hem our court, & banysh hem for euer
So that thei in more come they neuer

Fulfylled be it, ceasyng al delaye
Loke there be none excusacion
Writtem in the lusty monthe of Maye
In our paleys where many a myllyon
Of louers true we haue habytacion
The yere of grace ioyful and ioconde
Thousande foure hundred and seconde.

Explicit.

Thus endeth the letter of Cupyde, and here after folowyth a balade in cõmendacion of our Lady.

Thoulãde stories conde I more reherce
Of olde poetes, touchig this matere
Howe that Cupyde the hertes gan so perce
Of his seruantes settig hem in fere
Lo here the fyne of thertour and the fere
Lo here of loue the guerdon and grenaunce
That euer vnto his seruauntes do auaũce

Wherfore now playnly I wol my style dresse
Of one to speke, at nede that wol not fayle
Alas for dole I ne can ne may expresse
Her passyng prise, and that is no mervayle
O wynde of grace, now blowe vnto my saile
O auryate lycour of Cleo for to write
My penne enspyre of that I wol endyte

Alas, vnworthy I am and vnable
To loue suche one, al women surmountyng
But she be benigne to me and merciable
That is of pyte the welle and eke the spryng
Wherfore of her in laude and in playsyng
So as I can, supported by her grace
Right thus I say, kneelyng tofore her face

O sterre of sterres with thy stremes clere
Sterre of the see, to shypmen lyght and gyde
O lusty lyuyng moste pleasaunt to apere
Whose bryght beames the cloudes maye not hyde
O way of lyfe to hem that go or tyde
Haven after tempest surest vp to ryue
On me haue mercy for thy loyes fyue

O rightful rule, o bote of holynesse
And lightsome lyne of pyte for to playne
Origynal begynning of grace & al goodnesse
And clenest conduyt of vertue most soverayne
Mother of mercy, our trouble to restrayne
Chambre and closet clennest of chastyte
And named herbrough of the deyte

O closed garden al voyde of wedes wicke
Crystallyn welle, of clerenesse clere consigned
Fructyfyed olyue of foyles fayre and thicke
And redolent cedre most dere worthly digned
Remembre on synners that to þ be assigned
Or wicked fedes her wrathe on hem wreche
Lanterne of lyght thou her lyues leche

Paradyse of plesaunce, gladsome to al good
Benigne braunchelet of the pyne tre
Vynarie ennermayled, tekefher of our bote
Lycour ayen al langour þ pained may not be
Blyssful blomy blosome, bydyng in bounte
Thy mantel of mercy en our myserie sprede
And er we awake wrappe vs vnder thy wede

O rody rosyer, flouryng without spyne
Foũtaine al fythlesse, as bryzel currant clere
Sõe drop of thy graceful dewe to vs propine
O light without nebule, shyning i thy sphere
Medecyne to mischeues, pucelle vnwemmed pere
Flambe down þ doleful light of thyne influẽce
Remẽbryng thy seruãtes for thy magnificence

Of al christen protectryce and tutele
Returne of exyled put in the prescripcion
To hem that erren in the pathe of her sequele
To wery forwandred tent and pauylion
To faynte and to freshe the pausacion
Vnto vnrest, bothe rest and remedye

A balade of our Lady.

Fructuous to all tho that in her alye

To hem that reuen thou arte stenerastie
O blyssful brawe to knyghtes of thy werre
To werry werkmen the is dioure denarie
Wede vnto martyrers that haue sayled ferre
Laureate crowne stremyng as a sterre
To hem that put hem in palastre for thy sake
Cours of her cõquest, thou whyte as any lake

O myrthe of martyrs, swotter than sytole
Of confessours also eyther donatyfe
Unto virgyns eternal lauriole
Afore al women hauyng pterogatyfe
Mother and maide, bothe wydowe and wife
Of all the worlde is none but thou alone
Nowe sythe thou may, be socour to my mone

O truly turtle trustfastest of alderewe
O curteyse columbe, replete of al meknesse
O nyghtyngale with thy notes newe
O poppynay pured with al clennesse
O laureole of loue, syngyng with swetnesse
Phebus awayeyng tyl on thy brest he lyghte
Under thy wynge at domesday, bs dyght

O rubye rubified in the passyon
Of thy sonne, bs haue amonge in mynde
O stedfast dyamerte of duracion
That sewe feres any tyme might thou fynde
For none to him was founden halfe so kynde
O hardy herte, o louyng creature
What was it but loue that made ꝑ so endure

Demely saphyr, depe loupe & blewe ewage
Stable as the loupe ewage of pyte
This is to say the freshest of vysage
Thou louest vnchaunged hem that serue the
And if offence or baryeng in hem be
Thou arte aye redye vpon her wo to rewe
And hem receyuest with hert ful trewe

O goodly gladed whan that Gabryel
With ioy ꝑ gretted, that may not be nombred
Or halfe the blysse who coude write or tel
Whan the holy goste to the was obumbred
Wherthrough fendes were bitterly encõbred
O womanesse mayde embelyshed in his bryghe
That man and aungel therof haddern myrthe

Lo here the blosme and the budde of glorie
Of which the prophete so lõge spake before
Lo here the fame that was in memorie
Of Elaye, so longe or he was borne
Lo here of Dauid the delycious corne
Lo here the grounde of lyfe in to bylde
Becomyng man our raunsom for to yelde

O glorious hyole and hyte inuyolate
O fyry Tytan, persyng with thy bemes
Whose vertuous brightnes was i dred vbrate
That al the worlde embelyshed with ꝑ lemes
Conseruatryce of kynges, dukes, & realmes
Of Isaies sede swete sumamyte
Mesure my mournig myn owne Margarite

O souereignest sought out of Dyon
Cockle ꝑ golde dewe from above berayned
Dewe budde vnbrent, fyrelesse fyre set on
Flambing with feruẽce, not ꝑ here payned
Burnyng bayste that no wether stayned
Fleece vndefouled of gentylest Gedeon
And fructifyeng fayrest the yerde of Aaron

The mighty arche, probatyke pisceyne
Laughyng auroze, and of peace olyue
Columpne & baste, vp bearyng from abyme
Why nete I conuyng here to discryue
Chosen of Joseph, whom he toke to wyue
Unknowyng him, chyldyng by miracle
And of our manly fygure the tabernacle

I haue none englyshe conuenyent & digne
Myn herres heale lady the with to honour
Vuoyde cleane, therfore I wol resigne
In to thyne hande, syl thou lyst socour
To helpe my makyng bothe flowyshe & flour
Than shulde I shewe in loue howe I brende
In songes makyng, thy name to cõmende

For if I coude before thyne excellence
Syngen in sone I wolde what I sele
And euer standen lady in thy presence
To shewe in open howe I loue you wele
And sych although your herte be made of
To you withouten any discreuerance (stele
Jay en vous tout ma fiance

Where myght I loue euer better beset
Than in this lylie lykyng to beholde
The face of loue, the bonde so wel thou knyt
That I may se the or myne herte colde
And or I passe out of my dayes olde
Tofore syngyng euermore bitterly
Your eyen two wol stere me sodainly

For

For lone I langour, blissed be such sickenesse
Sith it is for you my herte ly suffysaunce
I can not els say in my distresse
So fayre one hath myne herte in gouernaūce
And after that I begynne on esperaunce
With feble entune, though it thyne hert perce
Yet for thy sake this letter I do reherse

God wot on musyke I can not, but I gesse
Alas why so, that I myght say or syng
So lone I you my owne souerayn maistres
And euer shal without departyng
Myrrour of beaute, for you out shulde I ring
In remembraunce eke of your eyen clere
Thus ferre from you my souerayn lady dere

So wolde god your lone wolde me so
Sythe for your sake I synge day by day
Herte why nyte thou breake a two
Sith with my lady dwel I ne may
Thus many a roundel and many a birelay
In frenche englysshe, whan I me layser fynde
I do recorde, on you to haue mynde

Nowe lady myne, sithe I you lone & dreade
And you vnchaunged euer fynde in o degre
Whose grace ne may flie fro your womanhede
Disdayneth not for to remembre on me
Myne hert bleedeth for I may not you se
And sithe ye wotte my meaning desyrous
Plures pur moy si bous plaist amorous

What marueyle is though I in payne be
I am departed from you my souerayne
Fortune alas, dont vient la destenie
That in no wyse I can ne may attayne
To se the beaute of your eyen twayne
Wher fore I say, for tristesse doth me grame
Cant me fait male departir de ma dame

Why nere my willing bronzt to suche esploit
That I myght say for ioy of your presence
Dre a mon euer ce qui vouilloit
Dre a mon euer, the hyghest excellence
That euer had wight, a sithe myne aduertēce
Is in you, reweth on my paynes smerte
I am so sore wounded to the herte

To lyue wel merry two louers were yfere
So may I saye withouten any blame
Yf any man to wylde were
I coude hym teche for to be tame
Let hym go lone and se where it be game
For I am bridled vnto soberneſſe
For her that is of women chefe pryncesse

But euer whan thought my hert shuld endyte
Than vnto me is best remedy (ce
Whan I loke on your goodly freshe face
So mery a myrrour coude I neuer espy
And yf I coude I wolde it magnify
For neuer none was so fayre yfounde
To reken hem al, and also Rosamounde

And fynally with mouthe and wyl present
Of double eye without repentaunce
Myn herte I yeue you lady in this entent
That ye shal holly therof haue gouernaūce
Taking my leaue with hertes obeysaunce
(Salue regina) syngyng laste of al
To be our helpe whan we to the cal

Al our lone is but ydleneſſe (tayne
Saue your lone alone, who might therto at-
Who so wol haue a name of gentylleſſe
I counsayle him in loue that he nat fayne
Thou swete lady, refute in euery payne
Whose mercy most to me auayleth
To gye by grace, whan that fortune fayleth

Nought may be tolde withouten any fable
Your high renome your womanly beaute
Your gouernaunce to al worshyp able
Nutreth euery hert in ease in hys degree
O violet, o flour desyree
Sithe I am for you so amerous
Estreynes moy de euer ioyous

With feruent hert my brest hath brost on fire
Ardant espoir que mon euer poynt est mort
Dauoir lamour de celle que ie desire
I meane you swete most plesaunt of port
Et ie say bien que ceo nest pas mon tort
That for you synge, so as I may for mone
For your departyng, alone I lyue alone

Thoughe I might I wolde none other chese
In your seruyce I wolde ben founden sadde
Therfore I loue no labour that ye lese
Whan in longing forest ye be stadde
Loke vp you louers and be right gladde
Fyrst fayre Valentynes day
For I haue chese that neuer forsake I may.

Explicit.

A balade to kyng Henry the fourth.

John Gower,

vnto the worthy and noble kynge Henry the fourth.

Noble worthy kynge
Henry the ferthe
In whome the glad for-
tune is befal
The people to gouerne
here vpon erthe
God hath the chosen in
comfort of vs al
The worship of this lãd which was dom fal
Now stant vpryzt thzough grace of thy good
Whiche euery man is holde for to bleſſe nelle

The hig he god of his iuſtyce alone
The right whiche longeth to thy regalye
Declared hath to ſtande in thy perſone
And more than god may no man iuſtify
Thy tytel is knowe vpon thyne aunceſtry
The lõdes folke hath eke thy right affirmed
So ſtante thy reigne, of god & man cõfirmed

There is no man may ſaye in otherwyſe
That god hym ſelfe ne hath ꝑ right declared
Wherof the lande is bounde to thy ſeruyce
Whiche for defaute of helpe hath long cared
But nowe there is no mannes herte ſpared
To loue and ſerue, and worſche thy pleſaunce
And al this is thzough goddes puruеyaunce

In al thyng whiche is of god begonne
There folowеth grace if it be wel gouerned
Thus tellen they whithe olde bokes conne
Wherof my lord I wote wel thou arte lerned
Alke of thy god, ſo ſhalte thou nat be wanted
Of no requeſt whiche is reſonable
For god vnto the good is fauozable

Kyng Salomon whiche had at his aſkyng
Of god, what thyng him was leueſt craue
He chaſe wyſedom vnto gouernyng
Of goddes folke, the whithe he wolde ſaue
And as he chaſe it fyl him for to haue
For thzough his witte while ꝑ his rrigne laſt
He gate him peace and reſt in to his laſte

But Alexander as telleth his ſtozie
Vnto the god beſought in other wey
Of al the wozlde to wynne the victozie
So that vnder hys ſwerde it myght obey
In warre he had al that he wolde pzey
The mighty god behight him that beheſt
The wozlde wanne, and had it of conqueſt

But though it fyl at thylke tyme ſo
That Alexandze hys aſkyng hath atcheued
Thys ſinful wozlde was al paynem tho
Was none whiche hath the high god beleued
No wõder was though thilk world was gre
Though a tyzant his purpoſe mizt wyn (ued
Al was vengraunce and infoztune of ſyn

But nowe the fayth of Chziſt is come a place
Amonge the pzinces in thys erthe here
It ſyette hem wel to do pyte and grace
But yet it muſt be tempozed in manere
For they fynden cauſe in the matere
Upon the poyne, what afterwarde betyde
The lawe of ryght ſhal not be layde a ſyde

So may a kynge of warre the boyage
Ozdayne and take, as he therto is holde
To clayme and aſke his rightful heritage
In al places where it is withholde
But otherwiſe yf god hym ſelfe wolde
Affirme loue and peace bitwene the kynges
Peace is the beſt aboue al erthly thynges

Good is to eſchewe warre, and natheleſs
A kynge may make warre vpon his right
For of batayle the final ende is pees
Thus ſtant the lawe that a wozthy knight
Upon his trouth may go to the fight
But yf ſo were that he myght cheſe
Better is the peace of which may no man leſe

To ſette peace ought euerych on lyue
Fyzſt for to ſette hys liege lozde in reſt
And eke theſe other men that they ne ſtryue
For ſo this lande may ſtande at beſt
What kyng that wolde be the wozthyeſt
The more he myght our deedly warre ceaſe
The more he ſhulde his wozthyneſſe encreaſe

Peace is the chefe of al the wozldes welth
And to the heuen it ledeth eke the way
Peace is of ſoule and lyfe the mannes helth
Of peſtylence, and doth the warre away
My liege lozde take hede of that I ſay
If warre may be leſte, take peace on hande
Whiche may not be without goddes ſande

With

With peace stant euery creature in rest
Without peace there may no lyfe be gladde
Aboue al other good peace is the best
Peace hath him self whan wer is al bestadde
The peace is safe, the warre is euer dradde
Peace is of al charite the kay
Whiche hath the life and soule for to way

My liege lorde if that the lyste to seche
The soth rulaples what ꝑ war hath wrought
Thou shalt wel here of wyse menes speche
That deedly warre tourneth in to nought
For if these old dokes be wel ysought
There mist thou se what thig ꝑ war hath do
Bothe of conquest and conquerour also

For bayne honour, or for the worldes good
They that whilom the stronge warres made
Where be they now, bethinke wel in thy mood
The day is gone, the night is derke & fade
Her cruelte which made hem than glade
They forowē now, & yet haue nauzt ꝑ more
The blode is shad, which no man may restore

The warre is mother of the wronges al
It sleeth the preest in holy church at masse
Forlyth the mayde, and dothe her flour to fal
The warre maketh the great eyte lasse
And dothe the lawe his rules ouerpasse
Ther is nothig wherof mischefe may growe
Whiche is not caused of the warre I trowe

The warre bringeth in pouertie at his heles
Wherof the comen people is sore greued
The war hath set his cart on thilke wheles
Where that fortune may nat be beleued
For whan men wene best to haue acheued
Ful ofte it is al newe to begyn
The war hath nothing syker tho he wyn

For thy my worthy prince in Christes halue
As for a parte whose fayth thou hast be gyde
Ley to this olde sore a newe salue
And do the warre away what so betyde
Purchace peace and set it by thy syde
And suffre nat thy people be deuoured
So shal thy name euer after stand honoured

If any man be nowe or euer was
Ayen the peace thy preuy counsaylour
Lette god be of thy counsayle in this caas
And put away the crewel warryour
For god which is of man the creatour
He wolde not men slough his creature
Without cause of deedly forfayture

Where nedeth most, behoueth most to loke
My lorde, howe so thy warres be withous,
Of tyme passed, who that hede toke
Good were at home to se right wel about
For euermore the worste is for to dout
But if thou mightest parfyte peace attayne
There shulde be no cause for to playne

Aboue a kyng good counsayle is to preyse
Aboue al other thynges most vayliable
But yet a kyng within him selfe shal peyse
And seen the thynges that be reasonable
And therupon he shal hys wittes stable
Among the men to serue peace in euyn
For loue of hym whiche is the kyng of heuyn

I, wel is him that shedde neuer blode
But if it were in cause of right wyfulnesse
For yf a kynge the peryl vnderstode
What is to slee the people, than I gesse
The deedly warres and the heuynesse
Wherof peace disfourbed is ful ofte
Shuld at some tyme cesse and wexe softe

O kynge fulfylled of grace and knighthode
Remēbre vpon this poynte for Christes sake
If peace be profered vnto thy manhode
Thyne honour saue, let it not be forsake
Though thou ꝑ warres darst wel vndertake
After reason yet tempre thy courage
For lyke to peace there is none auauntage

My worthy lorde, thynke wel howe so befal
Of thilke lore, as holy bokes sayne
Christ is the heed, and we be membres al
As wel the subiecte as the souerayne
So sitte it wel that charite be playne
Whiche vnto god hym self most accordeth
So as the loore of Christes worde recordeth

In tholde lawe or Christ him self was bore
Amonge the .x. commaūdementes I rede
Howe that manslaughter shulde be forbore
Such was the wil that tyme of the godhede
But afterward whil Christ tolde his mānede
Peace was the first thing he let do crye
Fremst the worldes rancour and enuye

And or Christ went out of this erthe here
And stighed to heuyn, he made his testament

Where

Where he bequath to hys disciples there
And yaue hys peace, which is the foũdement
Of charyte, without whose assent
The worldes peace may neuer wel be tryed
Ne loue kept, ne lawe iustyfyed

The Jewes with ỳ paynyms hadden werre
But they among hem selfe stode euer i peace
Why shulde than our peace stande out of ere
Which Christ hath chose vnto his own encrese
For Christ is more than was Moyses
And Christ hath sette the parfite of the lawe
The which shulde in no wyse be withdrawe

To yeue vs peace was cause why christ dyde
Without peace may nothig stonde auayled
But nowe a man may se on euery syde
Howe Christes fayth is euery day assayled
With paynyms distroyed & so batayled
That for defaute of helpe and of defense
Sinneth hath Christ his dewe reuerence

The right fayth to kepe of holy churche
The first poynt is named of knyghthode
And euery man is holde for to worche
Vpon the poynt ỳ stante to hys manhode
But now alas, the fame is spred so brode
That euery man this thyng complayneth
And yet is there no man that helpe ordayneth

The worldes wayle is wayted ouer al
There be the warres redy to the ful
But Christes owne cause in special
There ben the swerdes and the speares dul
And with the sentence of the Popes bul
As for to done the folke payne obey
The churche is tourned al another wey

It is wonder aboue any mannes wyt
Without war how Christes fayth was won
And we that be vpon this erthe yet
Ne kepe it not as it was fyrst begon
To euery creature vnder the sonne
Christ bad him selfe that we shulde preche
And to the folke his Euangely teche

More right it is to kepe than to make
But that we foundem made to fore honde
We kepe not, but let it lyghtly slake
The peace of Christ hath al to broke his bõde
Ne rest our lyfe, and suffren euery londe
To fer eche other, as thyng vndefended
So stant the warre, ỳ peace is not amended

But though the herd of holy churche aboue
Ne do not al hys hole busyneſſe
Amonge the people to set peace and loue
These kinges oughten of her rightwysenesse
Her owne cause amonge hem selfe redresse
Tho Peters shyp as now hath loste his stere
It lythe in hem the barge for to stere

If holy churche after the debate
Of Christes worde ne be nat al auysed
To make peace, accorde, and vnite
Amonge the kynges that be nowe deuysed
Yet natheles the lawe stant assysed
Of mannes wytte to be so resonable
Without that to stande hym selfe stable

Of holy churche we ben children al
And euery childe is holde for to bowe
Vnto the mother, howe that euer it fal
Or ris he must reason disalowe
And for that cause a knyght shal fyrst auowe
The right of holy churche to defende
That no man hurt the priuylege offende

Thus were it good to sette al in euyn
The worldes princes, and the prelates bothe
For loue of hym whiche is the kyng of heuyn
And if men shulde algate werren wrothe
The sarazins, whiche vnto [illegible] ben ie[illegible]
Let men be armed ayenst h[illegible]e fyght
So may the knyght his dede of armes right

Vpõ iii. poyntes stant Christes peace oppressyd holy churche in her selfe deuyded (fed
Which ought of reason first to be redressed
But yet so highe a cause is not desyded
And thus whan humble pacience is prided
The remenaunt whiche that they shulde rule
No wonder is though it stande out of rule

Of that the herd is sicke the lymmes aken
These reignes that to Christes peace beloge
For worldes good these deedly warres make
Which helpeles, as in balaunce hongen
The herd aboue hem hath nat vnderfongen
To set peace, but euery man sleeth other
And in this wyse hath charite no brother

The two defautes bringen in the thyrde
Of myscreantes that seen howe we debate
Betwene ỳ two, they fallen in a mydde
Where now al day they fynde an open gate
Lo, thus the deedly warre stant algate

But

But euer I hope of kyng Henries grate
That he it is, whiche shal the peace embrace

My worthy noble prince and kyng anoynt
Whom god hath of his grace so preserued
Beholde and se the worlde vpon this poynt
Is for thy part, that Christes peace be serued
So shal thy bygh mede be deserued
To hym whiche al shal quite at laste
For this lyfe here may no whyle laste

Be Alexandre, Hector, and Julyus
Be Machabeus, Dauyd, and Josue
Be Charlemayne, Godfray, and Arthus
Fulfylled of warre and of mortalyte
Her fame abyde, but al is vanyte
For dethe, which hath the warres vnder fote
Hath made an ende, of whiche ther is no bote

Who many a man the soth were and knowe
That peace is good for euery kyng to haue
The fortune of the warre is euer vnknowe
But where peace is, there is ꝑ marches saue
That nowe is vp, to morowe is vnder graue
The mighty god hath al grace in honde
Without him men may not longe stande

Of the tennes to wynne or leese a chace
May no lyfe were or that the bal be ronne
Al stant in god . . . at thing mē shal purchace
Thende is in hym or that it be begonne
Men sayne the wolle whan it is wel sponne
Doth hat the clothe is stronge & profitable
And els it may neuer be durable

The worldes chaunces vpon auenture
Ben euer set, but thylke chaunce of pres
Is so behouely to the creature
That is aboue al other peeries
But it may nat begette natheles
Amonge the men to laste any whyle
But where the hert is playne without gyle

The peace is as it were a sacrament
Tofore the god, and shal with wordes plays
Without any double entendement
Be treated, for the trouthe can not fayne
But if the men within hem selfe ben vayne
The substaūce of the peace may nat be trewe
But euery day it chaungeth vpon newe

But who that is of charite parfyte
He voydeth al sleyghtes ferre away
And sette his worde vpon the same plyte
Where that his hert hath founde a syker way
And thus whan conscience is trewely way
And that these ben handled with the wyse
It shal abyde, and stande in al wyse

The Apostel sayth, there may no lyfe be good
Whiche is not grounded vpon charite
For charite ne shedde neuer blood
So hath the warre as there no properte
For thilke vertue whiche is sayd pyte
With charite so ferforth is acquaynted
That in her maye no false sēblant be paynted

Cassodore, whose writyng is authorised
Sayth: where that pyte reigneth is grace
Through which ꝑ peace hath al his welth al-
So ꝑ of warre he dredeth no manace (lised
Wher pyte dwelleth in the same place
There may no deedly cruelte soiourne
Wherof that mercy shulde hys way tourne

To se what pyte forthe with merry dothe
The cronyque is at Rome in thylke empyre
Of Constantyne, whiche is a tale sothe
Whan him was leuer his owne dethe desire
Than do the yonge children to martire
Of cruelte he lefte the quarele
Pyte he wrought, and pyte was hys hele

For thylke mannes pyte whiche he drde
God was pytous, and made him hole at al
Syluester came, and in the same stede
Yaue hym baptyme first in special
Whiche dyd away the fyune original
And al his lepre it hath so purifyed
That his pyte for euer is magnifyed

Pyte was cause why this Emperour
Was hole in body and in soule bothe
And Rome also was set in thylke honour
Of Christes fayth, so that the leue of lothe
Which hadden be with Christ tofore wrothe
Receyued were vnto Christes loze
Thus shal pyte be prayed euermoze

My worthy liege lorde Henry by name
Which Englande hast to gouerne & ryght
Men ought wel thy pyte to proclame
Whiche openlyche in al the worldes sight
Is shewed, with the helpe of god almight
To yeue vs peace which lōg hath be debated
Wherof the price shal neuer be abated

A balade to kyng Henry the fourth.

My lorde, in whom hath euer yet be founde
Pyte, without spotte of vyolence
Kepe thyne peace alway within bounde
Wherin god hath planted in thy conscience
So shal the cronyque of thy pacience
Amonge the sayntes be taken in to memorye
To the legende of perdurable glorye

And to thyne erthly prince, so as I can
Whiche euery man is holde to comende
I Gower, whiche am al thy liege man
This letter vnto thyne excellence I sende
As I whiche euer vnto my lyues ende
Wil praye for the state of thy persone
In worshyp of thy sceptre and thy throne

Not onely to my kynge of peace I write
But to these other princes christen al
That eche of hem his owne herte endyte
And se the warre or more mischefe fal
Set eke the ryghtful hope vpon his stal
Kepe charyte, and drawe pyte to hande
Mayntayn lawe, and so the peace shal stande.

Explicit carmen de pacis cõmendacione qõ ad laudem et memoriam serenissimi principis domini Regis Henrici quarti, suis humilis orator Johannes Gower compositit.

Electus Christi, pie rex Henrici fuisti
Qui bene venisti, cum propria regna petisti
Tu mala vicisti quę bonis bona restituisti
Et populo trisi, nona gaudia contribuisti
Est mihi spes lata, qõ adhuc per te renouata
Succedent fata, vetteri probitate beata
Est tibi nam grata, gratia sponte data
Henrici quarti, primis regni fuit annus
Quo mihi defecit visus ad acta mea
Ota tempus habent finem natura ministrat
Quem virtute sua frangere nemo potest
Ulcra posse nihil quãuis mihi velle remanet
Amplius he scribam non mihi posse manet
Dum potui scripsi, sed nõe quia curua senectꝰ
Turbauit sensus scripta trimquo frotis
Scribat qui venier post me discretior alter
Ammodo namq; manus et mea penna silent
Hoc tamen in fine verborum queso meorum
Prosperet quod seruet regna futura deus.

Explicit.

Of the Cuckowe and the Nyghtyngale.

The god of lone, ah benedicite
Howe mighty and howe great a lorde is he
For he can make of lowe hertes hye
And of hys lowe, and lyke for to dye
And harde hertes he can maken fre

He can make within a lytel stounde
Of sicke folke hole, ferthe and sounde
And of hole he can make seke
He can bynde and vnbynden eke
That he wol haue bounden or vnbounde

To tel hys myght my wyt may not suffyse
For he can make of wyse folke fui nyce
For he may do al that he wol deuyce
And lyther-folke to dystroyen vyce
And proude hertes he can make agryse

Shortly al that euer he wol he may
Agayns hym dare no wyght say nay
For he can glad and greue whom hym lyketh
And who that he wol he loweth or syketh
And most his myght he sherdeth euer in May

For euery trewe gentel herte fre
That with hym is, or thynketh for to be
Agayne May nowe shal haue some steryng
Or toioy or els to sone mournyng
In no reason so muche as thynketh me

For whan they may here the dayes synge
And se the floures and the leues spryngе
That dryngeth in to her remembraunce
I mauer, ease medled with grenaunce
And lusty thoughtes, ful of great longyng

And of that longynge cometh heuynesse
And therof groweth ofte great sickenesse
And for lacke of that that they desyre
And thus in May den hertes set on fyre
So that they brennen forth in great distresse

I speke this of feleynge trewly

If I be olde and vnlusty
Yet I haue lerne of ȳ sickenesse through May
Bothe hote and colde, and ayres euery day
Howe sore twys there wote no wight but I

I am so shaken with the feuers whyte
Of al this May slepe I but a lyte
And also it is not lyke to me
That any herte shulde slepy be
In whom that loue his fyry darte wol smyte

But as I lay this other nyght waking
I thought howe louers had a tokenyng
And amonge hem it was a commune tale
That it were good to here the nyghtyngale
Rather than the leude cuckowe synge

And than I thought anon as it was day
I wolde go somwhere to assay
If that I might a nyghtyngale here
For yet had I none herde of al that yere
And it was tho the thirde nyght of May

And anon as I the day aspyde
No lenger wolde I in my bedde abyde
But vnto a wodde that was faste by
I went forthe alone boldely
And helde the way downe by a broke syde

Tyl I came to e lande of whyte & grene
So fayre one had I neuer in bene
The grounde was grene, ypoudred with daysie
The floures and the greues lyke hye
Al grene and whyte, was nothyng els sene

There sate I downe among the faire floures
And sawe ȳ birdes tryppe out of her bowres
There as they rested hem al the nyght
They were so ioyful of the dayes lyght
They began of May for to done houres

They coude that seruyce al by rote
There was many a louely note
Some songe loude as they had playned
And some in other maner voice yfayned
And some al out with the ful throte

They proyned hem, & made hem right gay
And daunseden and lepten on the spray
And euermore two and two in fere
Right so as they had chosen hem to yere
In Feuerer vpon saynt Valentynes day

And the ryuer that I sate vpon
It made suche a noyse as it ron
Accordaunt with the byrdes armony
Me thought it was the beste melody
That myght ben yherde of any man

And for delyte, I wotte neuer howe
I fel in suche a slomber and a swowe
Nat al a slepe, ne fully wakynge
And in that swowe me thought I herde sing
The sorie byrde the leude Cuckowe

And that was on a tree right fast by
But who was than yuel apayde but I
Nowe god (qȝ I) that dyed on the croys
Yeue sorowe on the, and on thy leude boys
Ful lytel soyse haue I nowe of thy cry

And as I with the cuckowe thus gan chyde
I herde in the nexte bushe beside
A nyghtyngale so lustely syng
That with her clere voice she made ryng
Through al the grene wode wyde

Ah, good nyghtyngale (qȝ I then)
A lytel haste thou ben to longe hen
For here hath ben the leude cuckowe
And songen songes rather than hast thou
I praye to god yuel fyre her bryn

But nowe I wol you tel a wonder thyng
As longe as I laye in that swownyng
Me thought I wyst what the byrdes ment
And what they sayd, & what was her entent
And of her speche I had good knowyng

There herde I the Nyghtyngale say
Nowe good Cuckowe go somwher away
And lette vs that can syngen dwellen here
For euery wight eschewth the to here
Thy songes be so elenge in good fay

What (qȝ he) what may the eylen nowe
It thynketh me I synge as wel as thou
For my songe is bothe trewe and playne
And though I can not crake I sain sayne
As thou dost in thy throte, I wote neuer (bowe

And euery wight may vnderstande me
But nyghtyngale so may they not done the
For thou haste many a nyce queynt crye
I haue the herde sayne, ocy ocy
Nowe might I knowe what that shulde be

My foole (qꝺ̄ she) wost thou not what it is
Whan that I say, oey oey ywis
Than meane I that I wolde wonder fayne
That al they were shamfully ystayne
That menen aught agayne loue amys

And also I wolde that al tho had the dede
That thynke not in loue her lyfe to lede
For who so that wol not ꝑ god of loue serue
I dare wel say he is worthy to sterue
And for that shyl, oey oey I grede

Eye (qꝺ̄ the cuckowe) this is a queynt lawe
That euery wight shal louer or be to drawe
But I forsake al suche companye
For myne entent, is not for to dye
Neuer while I liue on loues yoke to draw

For louers ben the folke that ben on lyue
That moste disease haue, and moste vnthryue
And moste endure sorowe, wo, and care
And leste frien of welfare
Who hath ne deth it ayenst trouth to sterue

What (qꝺ̄ she) thou arte out of thy mynde
Howe might thou in thy churinesse fynde
To speke of loues seruauntes in this wyse
For in this worlde is none so good seruyse
To euery wight that gentyl is of kynde

For therof trewly cometh al goodnesse
Al honour, and al gentylnesse
Worthyp, ease, and al hertes lust
Parfyte ioye, and ful assured trust
Jolyte, plesaunce, and freshnesse

Lowlyhed, largesse, and curtesye
Semelyhed, and trewe companye
Dede of shame for to done amys
For he that trewly loues seruaunt is
Were lother be shamed than to dye

And that this is sothe that I sey
In that byleue I wol lyue and dey
And cuckowe so I rede that thou do swys
Than (qꝺ̄ he) let me neuer haue blysse
If euer I wyste that counsayle obey

Nyghtyngale thou spekest wonder fayre
But for al that is the sothe contrayre
For loue is in yonge folke but rage
And in olde folke a great dotage
Who wolde it dreth moste shal empayre

For therof cometh disease and heuynesse
So sorowe & care, and many a grete sickenesse
Dispyte, debate, anger, and enuye
Deperaunce, shame, vntrust, and trioulye
Pryde, mischefe, power, and woodnesse

Louyng is an office of dispayre
And one thyng is therin that is not fayre
For who that getteth of loue a lytel blysse
But if he be alway therwith ywys
He may ful sone of age haue his heyre

And nightyngale therfore holde the nye
For leue me wel, for al thy queynt crye
If thou be ferre or longe fro thy make
Thou shalt be as other that ben forsake
And than thou shalt hoten as do I

Fye (qꝺ̄ she) on thy name and on thee
The god of loue ne let the neuer ythee
For thou art worse a thousãdfolde thã wood
For many one is ful worthy and ful good
That had be naught ne had loue ybe

For euermore loue his seruauntes amendeth
And from al yuel taches hem defendeth
And maketh hem to dremme right in a fyre
In trouthe and in worthypful desyre
And whan him lyketh, ioy inough hem sẽdeth

Thou nyghtyngale he sayd, be styl
For loue hath no reason, but it is wyl
For ofte tyme vntrewe folke he easeth
And trewe folke so bytterly he displeaseth
That for defaute of corage he let hem spyl

Than toke I of the nyghtyngale kepe
Howe she cast a sygthe out of her depe
And sayd, alas that euer I was borne
I can forthynke not say one worde more
And right with ꝑ word she brast out to wepe

Alas (quod she) my herte wol to breke
To heren thus this leude byrde speke
Of loue, and of his worthypful seruyse
Now god of loue thou helpe me in some wise
That I may on this cuckowe ben awreke

Me thought than he sterte vp anon
And glad was I that he was agon
And euermore the cuckowe as he flaye
Sayd farewel, farewel popyngaye
As though he had scorned me alone

And

And than came the nyghtyngale to me
And sayd, frende forsothe I thanke the
That thou hast lyked me to restowe
And one auowe to loue make I nowe
That al this May I wol thy synger be

I thanked her, and was right wel apayde
Ye (quod she) and be thou not dismayde
Tho thou haue herde ỹ cuckowe crit thā me
For if I lyue it shal amended be
The next May, if I be not affrayde

And one thyng I wol rede the also
Ne loue thou not the cuckowe ne his loues so
For al that he hath sayd is strong leasyng
Nay (qō I) therto shal nothyng me bring
For loue and it hath do me moche wo

Ye, bse (quod she) this medicyne
Euery day this May or thou dyne
Go loke vpon the freshe dayesye
And though thou be for wo in poynt to dye
That shal ful greatly lessen the of thy pyne

And loke alway that thou be good and trew
And I wol synge one of the songes newe
For loue of the, as loude as I may crye
And than she began this songe ful hye
I shrewe al hem that ben of loue untrewe

And whan she had songe it to the ende
Nowe farewel (qō she) for I mote wende
And god of loue, that can right wel and may
As moche ioye sende the this day
As any yet louer he euer sende

Thus taketh the nightyngale her leaue of me
I pray to god alway with her be
And ioye of loue he sende her euermore
And shylde vs fro the cuckowe and his lore
For there is not so false a bryde as he

Forthe she flewe the gentyl nyghtyngale
To al the bydes that were in that dale
And gate hem al in to a place in fere
And besoughten hem that they wolde here
Her disease, and thus began her tale

The cuckowe, wel it is not for to hyde
Howe the cuckowe and I fast haue chyde
Euer sythen it was daye lyght
I praye you al that ye do me ryght
Of that foule false vnkynde bryde

Than spake o bryde for al by one assent
This mater asketh good auysement
For we ben bydes here in fere
And soth it is, the cuckowe is not here
And therfore we wol haue a parlyment

And therat shal the Egle be our lorde
And other peres that ben of recorde
And the cuckowe shal be after sent
There shal be yeue the iudgement
Or els we shal fynally make at corde

And this shal be without nay
The morowe after saynt Valentynes day
Under a maple that is fayre and grene
Before the chambre wyndowe of the quene
At wodestocke vpon the grene lay

She thanked hem, and than her leaue toke
And into an hauthorne by that broke
And there she sate and songe vpon that tre
Terme of lyfe loue hath with holde me
So loude that I with that songe awoke.

¶ Explicit.

Leude booke with thy foule rudenesse
Syth thus hast neyther beaute ne eloquence
Who hath the caused or yeue the hardynesse
For to apere in my ladyes presence
I am ful syker thou knowest her benivolence
Ful agreable to al her obeyeng
For of al good she is the best lyuyng

Alas that thou ne hadest worthynesse
To shewe to her some plesaunt sentence
Sythe that she hath through her gentylesse
Accepted the seruaunt to her digne reuerence
O, me repenteth that I ne had scyence
And leyser als, to make the more florishynge
For of al good she is the best lyuyng

Beseche her mekely with al lowlynesse
Though I be ferre from her in absence
To thinke on my trouth to her ỹ stedfastnesse
And to abrege of my sorowes the vyolence
Which causeth is, wherof knoweth yonr sapi
She lyke amōg to notifye me her likig (ence
For of al good she is the best lyuyng.

¶ Lennoye.

Auroye of gladnesse, and day of lustynesse
Lucerne a nyght with heuenly influence
Illumyned, rote of beaute and goodnesse

Humpins whiche I offende in sclence
Of grace I beseche alege let your wyttyng
Nowe of all good, syth ye be best lyuyng.

Explicit.

Scogan / vnto the lordes and gentylmen of the kynges house.

MY noble sonnes and ehe my lordes dere
I your father called vnworthely
Sende vnto you this lytel treatyse here
wrytten with myne own hande ful rudely
Although it be that I not reuerently
Haue wrytten to your estates, I you praye
Myne vnconnyng taketh benignely
For goddes sake, and herken what I say

I complayne me sore whan I remembre me
The sodayne age that is vpon me fal
But more I cõplayne my mispent iuuentute
The whiche is impossible ayen for to cal
But certainly the moste complaynte of al
Is to thynke that I haue be so nyce
That I ne wolde vertues to me cal
In al my youthe, but vyces aye cherysse

Of whiche I aske mercy of the lorde
That arte almighty god in maieste
Besekyng to make so euen accorde
Betwyxt the and my soule that vanyte
Worldly lust, ne blynde prosperite
Haue no lordshyp ouer my flesche to frele
Thou lorde of trust and perfyte vnyte
Out fro me vyce, and kepe my soule hele

And yeue me myght whyle I haue lyfe space
Me to confyrme fully to thy pleasaunce
Shewe to me thabundaunce of thy grace
And in good werkes graunt me perseueraunce
Of al my youthe forget the ignorauuce
Yeue me good wyl to serue the aye to querne
Set al my lyfe after thyne ordynaunce
And able me to mercy or thou deme

To you whom I loue moste entyerely
Is for to worne you as I can endyte
That tyme lost in youthe folily
Greueth a wight bodily and goostly
I meane hem that to lust & vyce entende
Wherfore lordes I pray you specially
Your youthe in vertue shapeth to dispende

Plante the rote of youthe in suche a wyse
That in vertue your growyng be alway
Loke alway goodnesse be in your exercyse
That thal you myghty make at eche assay
The fende to withstande at eche affray
Passeth worldely this perylous pylgrymage
Thynke on this worde, a werke it euery day
That thal you yeue a parfyte floured age

Taketh also hede how ỹ these noble clerkes
Wryten in her bokes of great sapyence
Saueng that fayth is dede thouten werkes
And right so is estate with negligence
Of vertue, and therfore with dilygence
Shapeth of vertue so to plante the rote
That ye therof haue ful experience
To worshyp of your lyfe and soules bote

Taketh also hede that lordshyp ne estate
Without vertue may not longe endure
Thynketh eke howe vices & vertue at debate
Haue ben & shal while the [illegible] may dure
And euer the vycious by auenture
Is ouerthrowe, and thynketh euermore
That god is lorde of al vertue, and fygure
Of al goodnesse, and therfore folowe his lore

My mayster Chaucer, god his soule saue
That in his langage was so curyous
He sayd that ỹ father whiche is dede & graue
Byqueth nothyng his vertue with his house
Vnto his children, and therfore labour ouse
Ought ye be, besekyng god of grace
To yeue you might for to be vertuous
Through which ye mist haue parte of his
(place

Here may se that vertuous nobleste
Cometh not to you by way of auncestrye
But it cometh by leful besyneste
Of honest lyfe, and not by slogardrie
Wherfore in youthe I rede you ye edefye
The house of vertue in suche a manere
That in your age may you kepe and gye
Fro the tempest of worldes wawes here

Thynketh

Onsyder well euery cyr-
cumstaunce
Of what estate so euer
thou be
Ryche, stronge, or migh-
ty of puissaunce
Prudent or wyse, discret
or bely
The dome of folke in sothe thou may nat flye
What euer thou dost trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

For in thy porte or in thyne apparayle
If thou be gladde and honestly be sayne
Anone the people of malyce wol not fayle
Without aduyce or treason for to sayne
That thyn array is made & wrought i bayne
What suffre hem speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

Thou wolde to kynges be equinolent
With great lordes euyn and peregal
And yf thou be torne and al to rent
Than wol they say, and iangle ouer al
That thou art a flogarde þ neuer thryue shal
Yet suffre hem speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If it befal that thou take a wyfe
They wol fal[illegible] in their entent
That thou art lykely euer to lyue in stryfe
Voyde of al rest, without alegement
Wyues hem maystren, this is their iugement
Yet suffren their speche, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If thou be fayre and excellent of beaute
Yet wol they say that thou art amorous
If thou be foule and dgiye on to se
They wol affyrme that thou art vicyous
The peoples langage is so dispytous
Suffre al their speche, and truste wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If so be that thou of parfyteneſſe
Haue auowed to lyue in chastyte
Than wol folke of thy persone expresse
That thou art impotēt tendre in thy degre
And thus whether thou be chaste or delaule
Suffre hem speke, and trust wel thys
A wycked tonge wol alway say amys

If thou be fatte or corpulent
Than wol they say thou arte a gloton
A deuourer, or els hydolent
Yf thou be megre or leane of fashyon
Cal the a nygarde in their opinyon
Yet suffre them speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If thou be ryche, some wol yeue the laude
And say it cometh of prudent gouernaunce
And some wol say it cometh of fraude
Or by sleyght, or by false cheuysaunce
To say the worst, folke haue so gret plesaūce
What suffre hem say, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If thou be sadde or sobre of countenaunce
Men wol say thou thinkest some treason
And if thou be gladde of dalyaunce
Men wol deme it dissolution
Callyng fayre speche adulacion
Yet let hym speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

And who that is holy by perfectiou
Men of malyce wol cal hym an ypocryte
And who that is mery of clene entencyon
Men say in ryot he doth hym deiyte (whyte
Some mourne in blach, some laugh i clothes
What suffre hym say, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

Who speketh muche is holden prudent
And who debateth, men say that he is hardy
And who that saith litel with great sentemēt
Some men yet wol wyte hym of foly
Trouth is put down, and now goth flattery
And who þ list plainly know þ trouth of this
It is a wicked tonge, that alway sayth amis

For though a man were as pacyent
As was Dauid thorowe humylite
Or with Salomon in wisdome as prudent
Or in knyghthode egal with Josue
Or manly proued, as Judas Machabe
Yet for al that, trust right wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

And though a man had the hygh prowesse
Of worthy Hector, Troyes champyon
The loue of Troylus, or the kyndnesse
Or of Cesar the famous hygh renoun
With al Alysaunders dompnacyonn
Yet for al that trust right wel this
Some wicked tonge wol say of him amis

Or

Balades.

Of thamphe a man of hygh or lowe degre
Of Tullius had the fugred eloquence
Of Senec the great mozalyte
Of al Cecus the fobrygte and prudence
The tōquest of Charles, Arnares magnificence
Yet for al, that truth right wel this
Howe wycked tonge wol fay of him amis

The wyfely trouth of penelope
Though they it had in her poffeffyon
Holynesse, beaute, the kyndnesse of Hedre
The lyfe vnfayned of Marcia Caton
Of Alcest the trewe affection
Yet dare I fay, and truth right wel this
A wycked tonge wol fay of her amis

Than fythen it is fo, no man may eschewe
The swerde of tonge, but it kerue and byte
Ful harde it is a man for to remewe
Out of their daunger hym for to aquyte
Wo to the tonges that hem so delyte
To hynder or sclaūder, & set their study this
And their pleasaunces to do and fay amis

Wolde noble princes, cherythers of vertue
Remembreth you of hygh discretion
The first vertue and moste pleasyng to Jesu
(By the writyng and sentence of Caton)
Is a good tonge in his opinyon
Chastyse the reuerse, and of wisdome do this
Withdraw we your heringe frō al ỹ sayn amis.

Cet sic est finis.

Thus endeth the workes of Geffray Chaucer.

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M. D. 54 o.

Cum gratulatione ad ingressum dum tolum.

Epitaphiū Galfridi Chaucer, per poetā laureatum, Stephanum Surigonum Nebiol. suavissima in decretis declamatum.

Perides maste si possint munia fletus
Funderet, diuinas atqz rigare genas.
Galfridi Ba. is chaucere crudelia fata
Plā gite: tu lachrymis obstruxisse nephas.
Vos colunt diuēs: at vos celebrare sepultum
Reddatur meritis gracia digna viro.
Grāde decus nobis est docti musa Maronis
Qua didicit melius lingua latina loqui.
Grāde, nouūqz decus chaucer tamāqz paratis
Pro quātum furtas pyrēa Etruscus rudis
Reddidit insignē maternis versibus, vt iam
Aurea splendescat, ferrea facta prius.
Hunc latuisse virū nil, si tot opuscula verses,
Viderit, egregijs que decorata modis,
Socratis ingenium, vel fontes philosophie,
Quicquid et archani dogmata sacra ferūt.
Et quasēqz velis, tenuis dignissimus ates
Hic vates, parvo conditus hoc tumulo.
Ah laudis quātum preclara Etrūria perdis,
Dum rapuit tantum mors odiosa virum,
Crudeles parce, crudelia fila sorores,
Non tamen extincta corpora, fāma perit.
Viuet in eternum, viuent sua scripta poete:
Viuant & eterno tot monumenta die.
Si qua bonos tāgit pietas, si carmine digno
Carmina qui cernit tot cumulata modis,
Hec sibi marmorea feriātur verba sepulchra
Per maneat laudis sarcina summa sue.
Galfridus Chaucer vates, et fama poesis
Materne, hac sacra sum tumulatus humo.

Post obitum Caxton voluit te viuere cura
Willelmi, Chaucer clare poeta tui,
Nam tua non solū cōposuit opuscula formis
Hec quoqz sed laudes iussit hic esse tuas.

3 DE 64